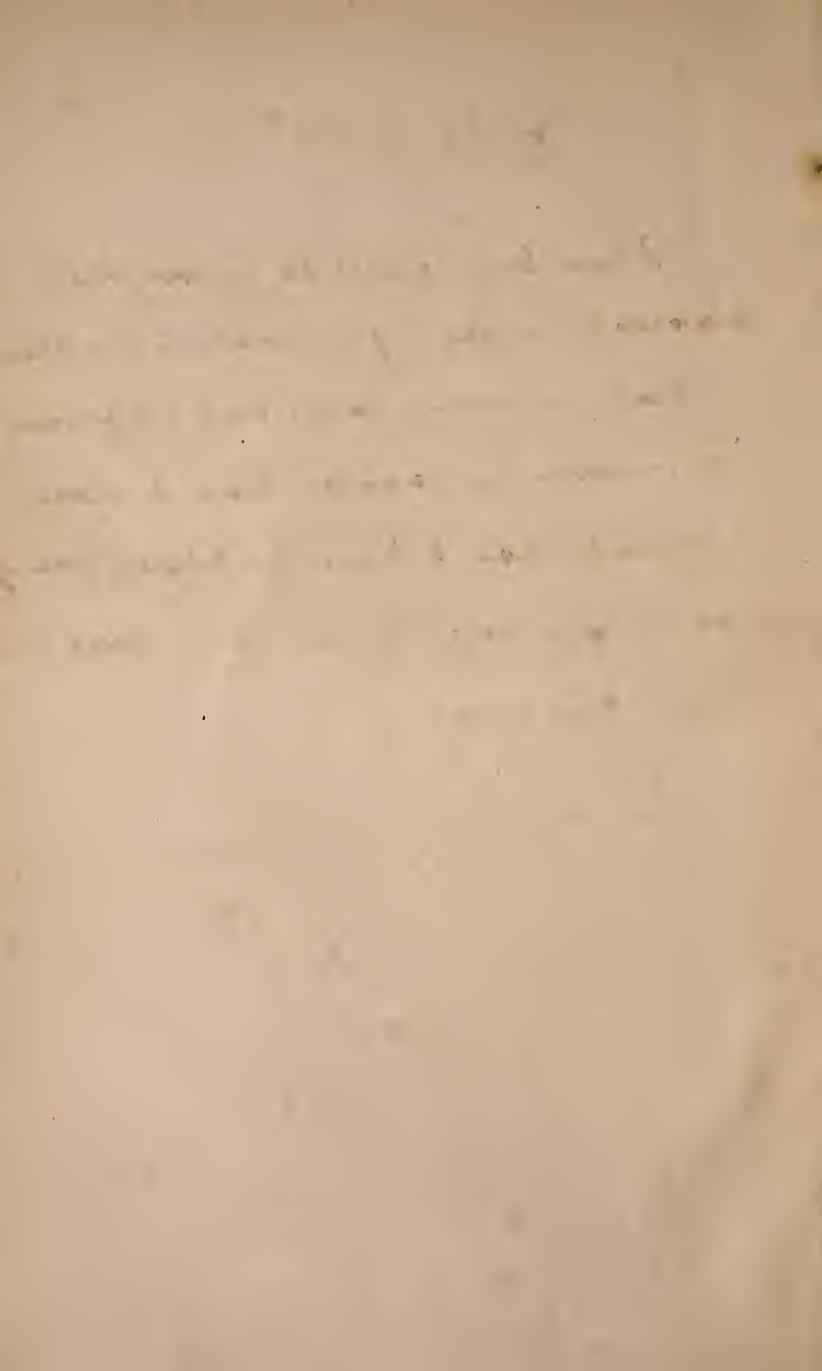




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For Mr. Dewitt Miller.

"I have been taught by history that a despotic system of government, although it may overcome local and temporary inconveniences, cannot bear a direct contradiction between political principle on the one and social institutions on the other side." (p. 10.)

C. Cherry

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# SPEECHES

OF

# CARL SCHURZ.

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COLLECTED AND REVISED BY THE AUTHOR.

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PHILADELPHIA:  
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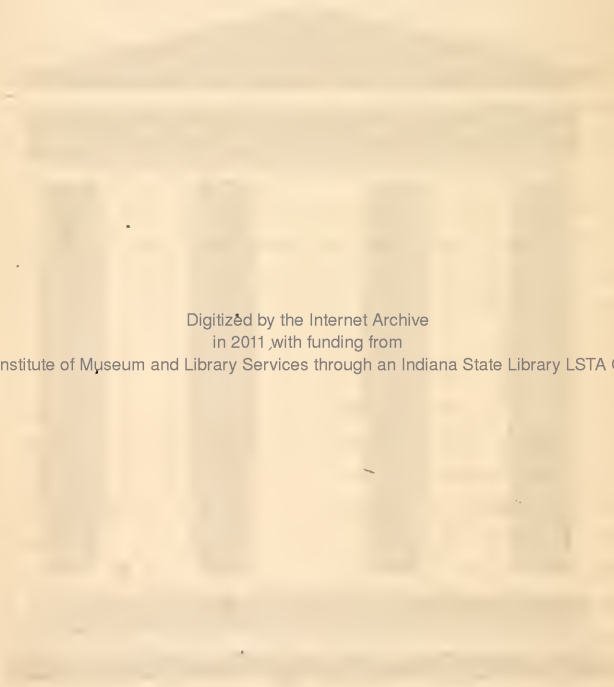
**The Union League of Philadelphia,**

which, in the struggle for national existence, has stood foremost  
among the loyal associations of the country,  
in enlisting the energies of private  
citizens for the  
cause of

**UNION AND LIBERTY,**

in propagating just, progressive and patriotic principles  
among the people, and in organizing military  
forces for the national service,

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## PREFACE.

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THE decade which elapsed between the years 1854 and 1864 will stand in the history of this country as its second revolutionary period. It commenced with the passage of the Kansas Nebraska Bill, the re-opening of the slavery question by a pro-slavery measure; and it closed with the second election of Mr. Lincoln to the Presidency, the solemn and emphatic declaration by a large majority of the loyal people, that the slavery question must be finally disposed of by the total abolition of slavery itself. The interval is filled with the fiercest struggles this country ever witnessed, in the domain of political discussion, as well as on the field of battle. The military campaigns of the great civil war will certainly live in history; but those who are in the habit of inquiring into the causes and results of historical events, will study with no less interest the rapid movement of ideas which marks this memorable period.

The moral merits of the slavery question have been discussed in this country almost since slavery was introduced here, and the conviction that slavery was a great wrong, was at several times almost universal among the people; the antagonism necessarily existing between the institution of slavery, and a democratic organization of society, has likewise been pointed out and urged upon the attention of the

people long before the final struggle commenced. But although slavery was considered wrong, those who possessed no slaves soothed their consciences with the idea that the slaveholders alone were responsible for it; and although the theory of the antagonism between slavery and democratic institutions seemed incontrovertible in the abstract, it was thought that, in reality, slavery might without danger be permitted to continue along with the other institutions and interests of the country, if things were only managed with prudence and a conciliatory spirit. As it is usually the case where the masses have to act for themselves, it required the element of practical impulse to produce clear intellectual perceptions, and to develop these intellectual perceptions coupled with a moral principle, into a motive for immediate action. The practical relation between slavery and other political questions of general concern, had not sufficiently penetrated the popular mind. It had to make itself practically felt, in order to be clearly understood. The Kansas Nebraska Act, involving the whole of our national domain, and seriously threatening our future growth and prosperity, went far to supply the deficiency; but when the slave power baffled in its aspirations by the election of 1860, rose up in rebellion, and thus disclosed its thoroughly anti-national tendency, the whole truth revealed itself to the eyes of the people. Forthwith it became evident to every fair-minded man that the question of Union or Disunion, although brought forward under the guise of divergent Constitutional theories, was only a new form of the slavery question, but now a form which demanded an immediate, and, at the same



time, final solution. All other political questions were at once found to be merged in this, and the people availed themselves of the first opportunity to decree a sweeping reform, destined to harmonize their social and political organization with the advanced state of their moral and intellectual enlightenment. It remains only for the representatives of the people to put this decree into a Constitutionally binding form, and for the General Government to enforce it with the strong arm of power. There are, it is true, influences which exert themselves to defeat this result even in the last stage of its final consummation; but their strength is growing less every day, and even the interposition of great accidents, such as are beyond the reach of human foresight, has become altogether improbable. According to all reasonable calculations, we may consider the great object of the revolutionary movement, the extinction of slavery throughout this Union, undivided and indivisible, as virtually insured.

I call it a revolutionary movement, not for the reason that the slave power rose in rebellion against the legitimate government of the Republic; for this was only a rebellion, while the true revolutionary movement was directed against the predominance of the slave power; nor for the reason that the rebellion produced contingencies unforeseen in the Constitution of the country; that the necessity of defending the integrity of the Republic against the people of a large number of States composing and constituting it, placed us, if I may use the expression, into an extra-constitutional condition; and that, in order to save the Republic, we had to fall back upon those general principles, according to which a government must

inherently possess certain powers necessary for the defence of its own existence. The employment of extraordinary remedies, for the justification of which recourse was had to the resources of Constitutional construction, was, indeed, unavoidable. But it may be said, that in all the great measures that were adopted, due care was taken to conform, at least, to the spirit of our fundamental laws; and, moreover, that, in spite of the pressure of the most urgent public dangers, the government never attempted to raise its authority above the reach of popular control, but always remained virtually in the hands of the people. This is a fact, which, when describing the extraordinary circumstances under which we lived, the historian of this remarkable period ought well to remember. The correspondence between governmental action, and the current of the popular mind, was, indeed, so intimate, that Mr. Lincoln's government, if we compare its characteristic features with the characteristic traits, the peculiar ways of thinking and feeling, of the American people, may well be designated as the most representative government the world ever saw. It is to this circumstance, by the way, that Mr. Lincoln's personal success is mainly attributable.

The revolutionary character of this period, then, pertains principally to the rapid movement of public opinion, and its action upon and through the Government. It finds its parallel in nearly every revolutionary event of modern times. A dominant power, the slaveholding aristocracy, long submitted to, attempts a glaring encroachment upon the rights of the most active and progressive element of society. The

popular mind gradually rises to a clear perception and appreciation of the true nature of the conflict. After a time spent in animated discussion, the attempt at encroachment is frustrated by the Constitutional action of the people. The dominant power thus resisted and baffled by Constitutional means, resorts to a coup d'état; the popular mind advances at once to the logical conclusion, that the further existence of that dominant power is incompatible with free institutions, and decrees its annihilation. The final decision then rests with the arbitrament of arms. This is, in a few words, the history of the last ten years, and, with a change of names and technical terms, it would, in this form, be applicable to the most decisive periods in the history of other nations.

It is natural that the manner in which the popular mind proceeded from conclusion to conclusion, should have found its best illustration in the political discussions which accompanied and aided the progress of public opinion. The value of such discussions does not consist alone in their showing the *modus operandi* of individual minds. An argument addressed to the people may, indeed, in the first place, be presumed to represent the individual opinion of him who produces it; but it will never have an effect upon the people, unless it serves to disclose and develop ideas which lie already, although perhaps in a crude and dormant state, in the minds of those who receive it. Principles are, indeed, eternal and in the abstract easily intelligible; but the manner of their practical application depends upon the drift of the times, and the intellectual range of those who have to apply them. There is, then, a continual action and reaction of mind

upon mind in which we discover a current of thought common to them all, and this common current becomes the source of progressive improvement.

In studying the political discussions of the last ten years—of which the speeches contained in this volume form but a modest part,—and inquiring into the views which governed, the emotions which agitated, and the motives which impelled the people in their action, we may, therefore, gain a clearer insight into the rules of logic which shaped the events of our days; this insight will strengthen our conviction that, what has arrived, was unavoidable, and what has been accomplished, is good; and, finally, it will show us, how unwise and dangerous it would be, to stand still, before the results already obtained are carried to that measure of completion and perfection which they imperiously demand.

These results are, indeed, very great, but, as the primary results of all revolutionary movements, they are strictly speaking of a negative character. They consist in the removal of the great obstacle to harmonious progress. That accomplished, new fields of inquiry, knowledge, and improvement, will open themselves to the people, on which, by positive, creative action, they will have to build a solid substructure for a broader and higher development of American Civilization.

C. S.

JANUARY, 1865.

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# SPEECHES BY CARL SCHURZ.

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## I.

### THE IRREPRESSIBLE CONFLICT.

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SPEECH DELIVERED AT MECHANICS' HALL, CHICAGO,  
ON THE 28<sup>TH</sup> OF SEPTEMBER, 1858.

*This speech was delivered in the memorable Senatorial campaign in Illinois, Mr. Lincoln being the candidate of the Republican, and Mr. Douglas the candidate of the Democratic party. The topics discussed may be presumed to be familiar to every American reader who is somewhat conversant with the politics of the day.*

MR. PRESIDENT AND GENTLEMEN:—

The remarks I am going to offer will not be of the exciting and enthusiastic kind. I will speak to your understanding, and call your attention to some of the simple broad principles which rule the development of human affairs.

The destinies of nations and countries are, indeed, not governed by majorities and governmental authority alone. You will sometimes see nations struggle with almost superhuman efforts against certain impending dangers; but an overruling fatality seems to frustrate all their exertions. This overruling fatality, which stands above the power of majorities and governments, I will call by



a simple term — *the logic of things and events*. It is the close connection between cause and effect, between principle and fact — a connection which cannot be severed, and the clear knowledge of which is the only safe foundation for political wisdom.

I have been taught by history that a democratic system of government, although it may overcome local and temporary inconveniences, cannot bear a direct contradiction between political principles on the one and social institutions on the other side. Such inconsistencies will and must bring forth questions and conflicts involving the very foundations of popular liberty. They may appear in different shapes, but when they have once taken possession of the political arena, they will overshadow all other issues. Everything else will be subordinate to them; they will form the only legitimate line of distinction between parties, and all attempts to divert public attention from them, or to palliate them with compromises or secondary issues, will prove futile and abortive. Their final decision, one way or the other, will decide the practical existence of a people.

Such a contradiction is that between liberty, founded upon the natural rights of man, and slavery, founded upon usurpation; between democracy, which is the life-element of our Federal Constitution, and privilege, which is the life-element of the slaveholding system and of Southern society.

I do not intend to make an anti-slavery speech in the common understanding of the term, dwelling at length upon the sufferings of the bondman and the cruelty of the master and the sinfulness of sin in general. My purpose is to investigate, from a political stand-point, the conflicts which, as natural consequences, must spring from the mixture of the contradictory principles of slavery and democracy.



When in a democratic community there is a powerful individual, or an association or class of men, whose claims and pretensions are in conflict with the natural rights of man in general, or with the legitimate claims of other individuals, and who deem their own particular interests above all other considerations, we may well say that the liberties of the people are in danger. When such individuals, or classes of men, find that their claims and pretensions cannot stand before a free criticism, they will spare no effort to impose silence upon the organs of public opinion; they will use force, if argument is of no avail. They will endeavor to concentrate all political power in their hands, and use it as a machinery for the promotion of their own selfish ends, and as a safeguard of their own particular interests. They will resort to usurpation, when, by constitutional means, they can exercise no absolute control.

In States which are ruled by absolute monarchs, the public press is manacled for no other reason than that absolutism and its excrescences cannot stand before the free criticism of public opinion, and that, if press and speech were let free to-day, there would be a death-struggle between public opinion and the absolute power to-morrow, which would result either in the complete overthrow of the latter, or complete re-enslavement of the former. But it is not essential that this powerful and dangerous interest should have monarchical aspirations; if it be an aristocracy, or an association of great merchants or planters, or, in general, a class of persons who have common interests which are inconsistent with the natural rights of man, and who deem them superior to all other considerations, and are determined to defend them, the tendency and the ultimate result will be the same. To such an interest the people will have to submit, or against such an interest the people will have to

fight. There will be a struggle, and there must be a victory. [Applause.] Is this applicable to slavery and the slaveholders? A rapid glance at the political development of this country will answer that question.

In the slaveholding States all political life is shaped by the ruling interest. While the people of the South profess the principle of equality, one class of citizens is accustomed to rule, and the other to obey (mark, I am speaking of the whites, not of the slaves), and the whole machinery of government, even to the smallest functions, is in the hands or under the control of the slaveholding aristocracy. While they profess the principle of political liberty, you dare neither speak nor write a word against the peculiar institution. While they claim to be free-men, they have fettered the hands of the people with the most odious police regulations, dictated by the instinctive fears common to all tyrants. While they claim to be an enlightened people, they do not suffer the great leading ideas of the age to be taught in their schools and colleges, for fear they might engender a thought against slavery. While they claim to be a religious and moral people, they address even their prayers to no other God than the black God of slavery. While they pretend to be a patriotic people, they have sacrificed to slavery the liberties of speech and of the press; sacrificed even the liberty of conscience; sacrificed the welfare of the non-slaveholding whites; sacrificed the prosperity and prospects of their own States; sacrificed the peace of the Republic. [Applause.] And they will tell you as often as you want to hear it, that they stand ready to sacrifice to the preservation of slavery the Union of these States, and the last remnant of their liberties and republican institutions. Nobody can deny it, in the South slavery overrules everything else; slavery rules in all. [Applause.]

And what about the North? Look at the party in power. It considered the Missouri Compromise a sacred compact as long as it served to augment the number of Slave States. It advocated the extension of the Missouri line to the Pacific Ocean, when, by that extension, a large territory might be acquired for slavery. It became suddenly convinced of the unconstitutionality of the Missouri Compromise, and repealed it, when that compact was to augment the number of the Free States. It changed the face of popular sovereignty ten times, according to the pleasure of the slaveholders. It considered the population of Kansas numerically sufficient to form a Slave State, but sadly insufficient to form a Free State. It lavishes, with unheard of profligacy, the money of the people for the benefit of the slaveholding interest, and treats the commercial interests of the free North with contempt. It applauds the most flagrant violations of the ballot-box, the most daring usurpations of power, when they serve the interests of slavery. [Cheers.] And how are all these amazing things effected? Look at the interior organization of that party. No kingdom, no hierarchy is ruled by a more absolute despotism than that party is ruled by its leaders. As I have shown, their principles are shaped and remodelled according to the arbitrary pleasure of the South, and the masses have but to obey, and they do obey. They are watched and dogged like a flock of sheep, turned out to pasture to-day, in order to be fleeced to-morrow. Look at the executor of John C. Calhoun's last will in the White House, who, like an oriental despot, hurls his anathemas and political death-warrants where he cannot debauch the conscience of a man with a bribe. All his power and patronage he has transformed into a vast machine of corruption in the service of slavery. - Cast your eye wherever you will, nothing but party despotism, nothing but the fiercest

oppression of moral independence, nothing but corruption organized into a system, and all this in the service of slavery. Will you deny it? Even in the North slavery struggles to rule it all. [Great applause.]

Where are we drifting? I will not dwell on our perverted commercial policy, nor on the question of internal improvements, and the like. I point out to you the general antagonism in which our political development is entangled.

I have often been told that the slaveholders are right in restricting the liberties of speech and of the press, etc., on the subject of slavery; for those liberties unrestrained would be a real danger to them. No doubt they would be a danger, but there is no more crushing argument against slavery than this, no more conclusive proof of its entire incompatibility with true democracy. When an institution in society cannot stand before the tribunal of free speech and free press, the question arises, shall we sacrifice our liberties to that institution, or that institution to our liberties. [Cheers.] *I hold that no interest which is incompatible with a free expression of public opinion, can have a right to exist in a democratic organization of society.* [Great applause.] And if it does exist, it will be like a chronic disease, or like an ulcer lying underneath the skin, which will leave no rest or comfort to the body politic, until it is finally extirpated and extinct. [Cheers.] It is in vain to palliate the disease by artificial means. It will break forth again and again with increased fury, and will urge on and on to a final crisis. Aye, sir, your standard-bearer is right, in spite of Douglas's sophistries. "A house that is divided against itself cannot stand." [Loud cheers.] It cannot stand! It must fall, unless it cease to be divided. [Continued applause.] By the inexorable, uncompromising logic of things, we must go either one way or the other; not as Mr. Douglas tries to

make you believe, make all States slave or free by force of arms; but we must either abandon the principle of equal rights, even among white men, and adapt the whole development of our political organization to the paramount interests of a privileged class of slaveholders; put the liberties of speech and press at the mercy of the ruling power, and sacrifice our democratic system of government to the aristocratic and despotic tendencies of the slaveholding system throughout, or we must break the political power of slavery in our national concerns, and return to the original principles on which this Republic was founded. In one word, we must formally recognize slavery as the ruling interest in our national policy, or we must deny it the recognition of any national right, and confine it to a merely local existence under positive State legislation. [Cheers.] This is the alternative.

Now, quibble as you will; devise side issues and subterfuges; invent palliative remedies; delude others and delude yourselves with fictitious compromises: this alternative will again and again push away all your plausibilities and sophistries, and say to you with the stern voice of inexorable fate: "Here am I! You have not seen me, perhaps, but here I am." [Cheers.]

And now, there comes a man, like Mr. Douglas, who ought to understand the signs of the times, and gives it as his opinion that slavery and democracy, having lived side by side these eighty years, may live on thus, and he does not see the incompatibility. Indeed! he does not see it! The same man, who once, in the name of the slaveholders, cried out to the champions of freedom in the Senate: "We will subdue you." He does not see that somebody and something must be subdued! [Applause.] A blind man does not see the sun, and yet it shines. A deaf man does not hear the thunder of heaven, and yet he will feel the



bolt of lightning when it strikes him down. [Repeated applause.] Aye, sir, slavery and democracy did live side by side these eighty years. But how did they live? Like two combatants that held each other by the throat, each watching his chance to strangle the other. [Cheers.]

Has Mr. Douglas seen or heard nothing of the din or clamor of that battle which has raged, with but short and apparent intermissions, since that time when the ruling parties of this Republic deviated from the original policy of the Revolutionary Fathers, to confine slavery within the narrowest limits, and to promote its gradual abolition by local legislation? Does he know nothing of the ridiculous failures of all the compromises that were called final settlements? May-be, he is not so blind; but what he sees, perhaps, does not suit him. [Cheers.] The conflict between slavery and democracy might have long ago been settled in the spirit of the Revolutionary times. But it was not; and it springs up in its true aspect, when Missouri claims admission as a Slave State. It is represented to be finally settled by the Missouri Compromise. And there it is again, lurking under the tariff question. It assumes threatening dimensions in the question of the annexation of Texas and the territories acquired from Mexico. It is again said to be finally settled by the compromise of 1850. But there it rises again, more terrible than ever, in the Nebraska Bill. Mr. Douglas then claims to have finally settled it by introducing his principle of squatter sovereignty. But streams of blood and smouldering ruins in Kansas give him the lie. [Cheers.] Then Mr. Buchanan's election was to settle it. But the poor old man has hardly set his foot in the White House, when the slavery question steps forth in unheard of turpitude from the hand of Judge Taney. There it is! It is like Banquo's ghost, which rises from the ground again and

again, shakes its bloody locks, and sits down at the very head of the banquet table. [Great applause.]

And there are some simpletons crying "Peace, peace! stop agitation!" Who agitates it? Who agitated it in 1820, but those who wanted to extend slavery in the free West? Who agitated it when Texas was to be annexed, but those who wanted to give to slavery an unlimited domain in the South and South-west? Who agitated it by the Nebraska Bill, but those who wanted to break down the last barrier to slavery? Who agitated it by the Dred Scott decision, but those who wanted to make slavery the rule, and liberty the exception? Who agitated it by the Lecompton question, but those who wanted to sacrifice the last safeguards of self-government to slavery? [Cheers.] And all those who did so were but obeying the logic of things. For slavery cannot live, unless it rules, and it can never keep peace, unless it dies. [Continued applause.] And still some simpletons are crying "Stop agitation!" Where will you begin? Where will you end? Stop agitation! The President of the United States makes not the most trifling appointment, or the slavery question is touched upon in the Cabinet. Congress hardly makes the most inconsiderate appropriation without considering matters from this point of view, and it is agitated! No legislative assembly in any of the States ever adjourns without discussing slavery in some way, and it is agitated. Aye, the smallest log-hamlet in the West hardly elects a constable without considering what the man's views on the subject of slavery are, and it is agitated. And now, stop agitation and cry peace, peace! There is, and there will be, war in the Cabinet of the President — war in both houses of Congress — war in every State Legislature — war in the smallest log-hamlet in the West; aye, war in every heart, until that all-absorbing conflict is settled. [Loud cheers.]

But now we stand before that awful, perplexing question: How is that conflict of contradictory principles to be appeased? How is the slavery question to be settled? There are, indeed, some persons, Democrats, affecting to be philosophers, who reason thus: "Let slavery spread wherever the slaveholders wish to carry it; let it conform the laws of the land to its principles, and adapt them to the sole purpose of its protection, nevertheless time, the natural process of development, and the spirit of the age, will do away with it." Ah! time and the spirit of the age may do wonderful things. They have even laid the Atlantic Cable; but, by the by, it required Cyrus W. Field to start the movement, and keep it going, Mr. Everett to superintend the machinery, and Captain Hudson to steer the Niagara. Aye, sir, do those men who reason thus know what the spirit of the age and the natural process of development mean? I will tell you the word—it is *action, action, and action again!* [Cheers.] I wonder whether those philosophers have ever looked into the history of the world. They would have learned there, how time, and the natural process of development, and the spirit of the age did away with the feudal system of society in Western Europe. What was that process of development, that spirit of the age, then? It is now commonly called the French Revolution. It was the sublimest phrenzy, and the bloodiest madness, of a people. It was the destruction of the Bastille. It was the decapitation of a king and of thousands of his adherents. It was the banishment of the whole nobility and the refractory priesthood. It was a sea of blood; it was twenty years of universal war; it was more terrible than an earthquake. [Cheers.] Have our philosophers a particular liking to that kind of natural process of development and spirit of the age? But as true as the sun will rise to-morrow, they will have the full benefit of it, if their policy,



unfortunately for themselves, should prevail. [Repeated applause.]

There is but one way of avoiding forcible revolutions, and that is by beginning a course of progressive reforms in time. When that season of absolute necessity may arrive, is certainly difficult to determine, but reforms will rarely be commenced too soon, and it may very soon be too late. Are the advocates of slavery sure that this "too late" is still very far off? Let them beware! If the people of the United States follow their advice, I see that kind of "process of development" advancing towards us with the steady step of Fate. I see a time drawing near when those irreconcilable contradictions will break out in a crisis more violent than any we have seen yet, and will envelop slavery, and union, and progress, and prosperity, in the flames of a universal conflagration. [Cheers.]

But now, methinks, I see Mr. Douglas standing there, with a broad smile on his face, and I hear him say with that refinement of style with which that great man endeavors to maintain the dignity of a United States Senator: "These predictions are all gammon. Haven't we got my great principle?" [Loud laughter and cheers.] Popular sovereignty! Was not popular sovereignty, according to Mr. Douglas, to appease the conflict, to remove the fight from the halls of Congress, to localize the struggle, to quell the excitement, to settle the slavery question forever? But how did it happen that the very enactment of that popular sovereignty, as embodied in the Nebraska Bill, was the signal for a new and spontaneous outburst of hostilities? How was it possible that this very remedy should fan the lingering strife into a new flame? And, indeed, the blood of American freemen spilt on the prairies of Kansas, the smouldering ruins of the pioneer's cabin — fired, not by the savage hand of the Indian, but by the hands of people that claim to be civil-

ized — the most flagrant violations of the ballot-box, the most shameless frauds, the most atrocious usurpations of power, ever known in the history of elective governments, and a struggle in Congress fiercer than ever — these are strange fruits of a measure which was to bring peace and liberty and prosperity to mankind. [Cheers.] It will no longer do to say that all this disturbance was owing to the obstinacy of a few abolitionists. The cause of all this lies deeper. It is this:

The Kansas-Nebraska Bill was but a new embodiment of the old contradiction between political principles and social institutions; it was but a new form of that old antagonism, which has convulsed the country for the last forty years. It is not the right kind of "popular sovereignty," but a worthless, treacherous counterfeit. It is a wild delusion — if you will not go so far as to call it an imposture, a lie. [Applause.] Popular sovereignty, in the true sense of the term, means the sovereignty of all individuals, so organized as to give a common expression to the collective will, limited only by the natural rights of individual man. Its foundations can be no other than the recognition of the equal rights of all men. It can be built upon no other presumption, but that all men are free, and that no institution which contradicts this principle, has, of itself, a right to exist.

But what means Mr. Douglas's great principle of popular sovereignty? He says, that the people of a territory shall decide for themselves, whether they will have slavery or not — that is to say, whether the employer may *own* his laborer, or whether he shall *hire* him. Did slavery exist in those territories at the time of the enactment of the Nebraska Bill? No, it did not. Well, now the people shall decide for themselves. But what shall be the rule, what shall be the law, *before* the people shall have given their verdict by positive legislation? Shall the presump-

tion be in favor of freedom, according to the fundamental principle of the good old Anglo-Saxon common law? No, sir, the slaveholder shall have the inherent right to go into the territory with his slaves, and to hold them there as slaves; the right of a man to *own* his laborer is, as such, recognised by the Kansas-Nebraska Bill. And here let me add, that the Dred Scott decision is a most logical construction of the Nebraska Bill [loud cheers] and acknowledged to be such by Mr. Douglas himself, and that his quibbles between his squatter sovereignty and that decision are the most contemptible subterfuges by which ever a pettifogger made himself ridiculous. [Continued applause.] Thus Mr. Douglas's popular sovereignty is based upon a presumption in favor of *slavery!* upon the presumption that slavery exists *of right*, where it is not prohibited by positive legislation. [Cheers.]

True popular sovereignty means the removal of all barriers which the ingenuity of despotism has set to human liberty. [Cheers.] But Mr. Douglas tells you that the true foundation of American popular sovereignty is the right of slavery to exist where it is not expressly prohibited, and that it means the removal of all barriers which American patriotism has set to human bondage! [Applause.] If you could ask Washington, Franklin, Jefferson, Jay, Madison, Henry Clay, for their opinions—who of them would christen this abominable mixture with the great name of popular sovereignty? They would have stigmatized it as a contemptible bastard, begotten in the adulterous embrace of Democracy and slavery, with the features of liberty on its face, but with the black venom of despotism in its heart. [Long-continued applause.]

I repeat it, sir, this so-called popular sovereignty is but a new embodiment of the old antagonism, but a new sign-board to the old concern; a new melody to the old song [cheers]; a new trap set for old fools. [Thundering ap-

plause.] It is the old mistake, the old confusion of ideas; there is nothing new in it but one feature, and that is its very worst.

It marks, indeed, a new period in the history of this country. All the compacts between freedom and slavery, struck by the fathers of this Republic and the subsequent generation of statesmen, were compromises between a principle and an interest. Endeavoring to reconcile the social institutions of this country with the fundamental ideas upon which this government was built, the fathers of this Republic labored for the gradual abolition of slavery wherever they could reach it. But, unable to extinguish it at once, they made concessions to slavery as to an unfortunately existing fact, without recognising in it any principle from which it might derive any national right. To them freedom was the ruling, the fundamental, the national principle, and slavery a local institution which existed only by sufferance, and to which concessions were made for the sake of temporary expediency. This spirit governed the councils of the nation in all acts relating to slavery, and Congress, therefore, did not hesitate to exclude from the national territories what it considered a nuisance. The manifest tendency was to remove the existing contradiction between the fundamental principles of our government and a social institution, by sacrificing the latter. [Cheers.]

Even the Missouri Compromise, so far as it excluded slavery from certain territories, was dictated by this spirit.

The Nebraska Bill, in opening the national territories to slavery, elevated slavery from the rank of a mere obnoxious fact to the rank of a national principle. According to that measure, slavery shall have the right to exist everywhere, by virtue of the national law, where it is not abolished and prohibited by local legislation. Before Mr.

Douglas's popular sovereignty slavery and freedom stand apparently as equal claimants. But in fact, slavery has acquired the right of precedence over freedom. This is the principle which Douglas has introduced into the policy of this country in place of the leading ideas of the revolution. He may claim the merit of being the first man who succeeded in displacing the political development of this Republic from the solid basis of the Declaration of Independence. The Nebraska Bill, very far from being a progressive movement, was the boldest step in the reaction against the principles of the Revolution.

Do not say that I am indulging in a mere play with abstract ideas and theoretical discriminations, and that things might look better in reality; for, I tell you, what is nonsense in theory, you will never make sense in practice.

I know, Mr. Douglas's principal position, that the people of the territories should be left free to settle the question of slavery for themselves, carries some plausibility with it. But why could it not be fairly and quietly executed? Because everybody tried to execute it as he pretended to understand it. Yes, sir, no sooner was the word spoken, than the contradiction, which lay hidden in the new measure, broke out in a practical conflict. This was not astonishing to me, for such must be the result when the construction of ambiguous measures is put into the hands of antagonistic interests. [Cheers.]

Look at the Constitution of the United States. Its words are the same for Mr. Gerrit Smith of New York, and for Mr. Hammond of South Carolina. But how does it happen that these gentlemen understand its meaning so differently? How does it happen that the same words which signify liberty to Gerrit Smith, signify slavery to Hammond? It is because their stand-points, from which they judge it, are different. The one looks at it from the



hills of free New York, the other from the miry soil of a South Carolina cotton-field. The antagonism between liberty and slavery has drawn in its whirl the current of human thought and the reasoning faculties of the human mind. But if such is the case even with the Federal Constitution, of which Madison said, that it should contain nothing which might remind coming generations that such an abomination as slavery ever existed in this Republic, what will be the fate of such measures, as are nothing but an *embodiment* of the old contradiction and antagonism between democracy and slavery? As soon as such a measure is enacted, both principles and both sections of the country representing them, will seize upon it and try to monopolize its construction, and what is construed to mean liberty here, will be construed to mean slavery there; and this is natural, for to the slaveholder the principal meaning of liberty is that man shall have the right to hold his fellow-man as property. [Cheers.]

Was it not so with the Kansas-Nebraska Bill? No sooner was that measure passed by Congress than the slaveholding interest succeeded in monopolizing its construction, and while our poor democrats in the Northern States were descanting on the beauties of territorial self-government, the South put down squatter sovereignty with a sneer, and all that remained of the "great principle" was, that the slaveholders acquired the absolute right to hold their slaves as property in all the territories of the United States "by virtue of the Federal Constitution." [Cheers.] What means the Nebraska Bill now? Ah, look at Mr. Douglas himself, how he is fluttering between the Northern and Southern construction of his "great principle;" how that happy father is hardly able to tell his own child, which is white to-day and black to-morrow [great laughter and applause]; how he bows to the Dred

Scott decision with his face towards Charleston, and then to territorial squatter sovereignty with his face towards Springfield. [Cheers.] Look at that disgusting, pitiable exhibition of a man who boasts of his greatness as a statesman with a thundering voice, and who is short-sighted enough not to see that, like a boy, he has fallen into the meshes of that eternal contradiction from which his pettifogging sophistries will never extricate him. [Thundering applause.]

Such has been the fate of squatter sovereignty, and of the man who invented it. And such will be the fate of all measures which, at the same time, concede to slavery the right to spread, and to liberty the right to restrict it. So long as our national laws countenance slavery in any way beyond that measure of right which it derives from the local legislation of the States in which it exists, the contradiction in our institutions will be the same, the agitation and the war will be the same, and no compromises, and no mock popular sovereignty will allay the struggle. It will be repeated over and over again as often as, and wherever, slavery has the slightest chance to intrude. All such measures, which embody both the antagonistic principles, are like a railroad train to which two locomotives are attached, one at each end. The name of one is Liberty — the name of the other, Slavery. If the two locomotives pull in different directions, what will be the consequence? Either the superior power of one will pull the train, together with the other locomotive, in its direction, or, the strength of both being equal, they will tear the train to pieces. And I tell you all measures like the Nebraska Bill will be torn to pieces by the different constructions put upon them.

What else, therefore, is Douglas's "great principle," but a wild delusion? What else is his policy, but a dangerous imposition? It speaks of harmony, and yet it pre-

serves the elements of strife and conflict. It speaks of peace, and yet it keeps alive the elements of war. Where is its safety? — where its blessings? [Cheers.]

There is the same struggle, everywhere, at all times. You must make up your minds to fight it out.

Since compromise measures and Mr. Douglas's "great principle" will not do it, what will? Let us learn from our opponents.

The clearest heads of the slaveholding States tell you openly that slavery cannot thrive, unless it be allowed to expand. And common sense must tell you, that the slave-power cannot rule, unless you submit to its dictation with cowardly obedience. [Cheers.]

Well, then, in the name of all that is good and great, if slavery cannot thrive, unless it be allowed to expand — pen it up! [Applause.] If the slave-power cannot rule, unless you lie prostrate on your knees — arise! [Repeated cheers.] I know Mr. Douglas will call this a revolutionary doctrine, but let him remember that he himself was called a revolutionist, when, by one of the strangest mistakes of his life, he opposed the Lecompton Constitution. [Cheers.]

In order to restrict slavery, you have but to return to the principles which dictated the ordinance of 1787, and which governed the policy of the greatest patriots American history can boast of.

In order to throw off the yoke of the slave-power, you have but to hold up your heads as men. [Cheers.] If they call this revolutionary, let them call it so. It is the revolutionary spirit to which this Republic owes its existence. [Applause.]

I will not waste your time by demonstrating that the power of Congress to exclude slavery from the national territories stood almost above all doubt and question, from the establishment of this Republic, down to the time



when Mr. Douglas thought it necessary to invent a "great principle" of his own. Every school-boy knows it; and even Mr. Douglas, who is not very timid in denying settled facts, will hardly deny this.

I will call your attention to the probable consequences of this policy which I am advocating. It has often been asserted that a great many of the Southern States would have abolished slavery long ago, had they not been annoyed by the intrusive efforts of Northern anti-slavery men; and that, in case of an anti-slavery victory in a national campaign, the slaveholding States would dissolve the Union at once;—and, sir, let me say, by the way, that I do not deem it out of place here to speak of the emergency of a national campaign; for, in my opinion, we are fighting the battle of the Union on the soil of Illinois [cheers], and a victory here in 1858, means half a victory in the federal campaign of 1860. [Tremendous cheers.] Well, what truth is there in those arguments and threats I was speaking of? Turn over the pages of our history, down to our days, and you will find that as long as the anti-slavery movement in the North was weak, distracted, irresolute, straggling, as long as the Northern mobs put down the champions of human freedom, as long as the North was more clamorous against abolitionism than the South herself, the slaveholder was more overbearing, and the institution seemed to be more firmly rooted in the South, than ever. But now look at the events of our days; behold the anti-slavery movement gaining strength, spreading, becoming powerful, forming in solid columns of defence and attack, and then with drums beating, and banners proudly flung to the breeze, rushing to a general assault on the very citadel of the slave aristocracy—the Federal Government. What are the effects now? Turn your faces Southward, see and listen! In the very heart of the Slave States the voice

of freedom begins to be heard! South Carolina trembles at the detection of abolitionists among the professors of her colleges! The warm soil of North Carolina bears crops of fiery anti-slavery books! See daring leaders putting themselves at the head of the non-slaveholding whites, and bidding defiance to the oligarchy! See a free-labor colony driving its wedge into the very heart of the Old Dominion! Aye, in spite of the election-frauds and ballot-box stuffing, all the bells of St. Louis are pealing the tocsin of emancipation [loud cheers], and before long the whole State of Missouri will respond with a triumphant echo! [Applause.] I tell you, the heroic youths in the fiery furnace of slavery are chanting the praise of freedom with fearless voices, for they have heard the wings of the angel of liberty rustling in the thunder-cloud of the northern horizon. [Long and continued applause.]

See here, the first earnest and powerful display of anti-slavery sentiments in the North; and there, right consequent upon it, the first bold effort of the anti-slavery elements in the South! Is this merely accidental? No! The emancipation movement in Missouri and the free-labor colony in Virginia are the first-born children of the Fremont campaign. [Applause.] Courage and energy here, will inspire them with boldness and energy there. Had the North acted manfully thirty years ago, Missouri, Kentucky, Virginia, Delaware and Maryland, would perhaps be Free States now. And now let us hear no more of the fanatics of the North disturbing the poor slaveholders in their meek philanthropic intentions. [Cheers.]

Such, sir, have been some of the effects of a great anti-slavery campaign, in which we were unsuccessful. Such have been the effects of a glorious defeat, which was merely a demonstration of growing strength. Now I ask you, what would be the effects of a great anti-slavery *victory*? I will undertake to answer: Give us a few years

more of firm, cheerful and successful co-operation among the anti-slavery elements of the North, and a few years more of strong encouragement and moral support to the anti-slavery elements of the South, and then a victory in a federal campaign, and who of the slaveholding aristocracy will dare to raise his hand against the result? [Cheers.] I tell you, then, Slave State will have to fight Slave State, before the South can accomplish secession. [Great cheering.]

Dissolution of the Union!\* Our Northern poltroons

\* It would seem that, in speaking with so much assurance of the future, the speaker ventured upon a ground which nobody can tread with safety. For what he said, however, he had two very good reasons:

1st. He did not believe that a serious attempt at secession would be made by the Southern people, and this opinion was at the time entertained and expressed by the most prominent men, and a large majority of the Republican party. He, therefore, expressed his true and sincere opinion.

2d. He believed then, and believes still, that, if such a plan was really entertained in the Southern States, a proper attitude on the part of the Northern people would have deterred them from making the attempt, and the language he used was intended not only to convey an individual opinion, but also as a demonstration of Northern spirit.

Before passing his judgment upon this matter, the reader must take into consideration the following facts:

The "fire-eaters" of the South availed themselves of every conceivable opportunity to throw out the threat of disunion. Their object was to frighten the people of the North into acquiescence in whatever they might demand, to promote the interests of slavery. In this they were aided by the Democratic party in the Northern States, who used the danger of disunion as their staple argument in their opposition to every measure tending to resist the progress and usurpations of the slave-power. In this way the slave-power achieved its most alarming successes.

This state of things presented to the anti-slavery party, or rather to the people of the Free States, the following alternative: Either they had to permit themselves to be frightened into submission to every demand the South might see fit to make, and thus to deliver the whole future of the Republic into the hands of the slave-power, or they had to disregard the threat, and to oppose to it a firmly-pronounced determination on their part to stand by the principles upon which the Union was originally founded, and to extend the dominion of free labor wherever slavery was not established by State legislation.

have been frightened to bed often enough by this bugbear. [Applause.] I have often wondered how a Northern man could repeat that stale threat without feeling the blush of shame rising to his cheeks, unless he felt his

To do the first would have been to put even the liberties and institutions of the Free States at the mercy of the slave-power; for the latter becoming convinced by fact that the disunion threat was overawing all minds and bearing down all opposition, would have boldly gone on with its demands, removed everything that stood in the way of its aspirations, and conformed our whole national policy to its interests. The onward march of the slave-power from the Missouri Compromise to the Nebraska Bill, to the Dred Scott decision, and the Lecompton Constitution, showed its ultimate tendency beyond a doubt; while such exactions as that the agitation of the slavery question should be put down, even in the Free States, and such boasts as that "they would call the roll of their slaves at the foot of Bunker Hill Monument," proved clearly that the ultimate views of the slave-power went beyond the limits of the Slave States and the territories. The disunion threat thus constituted a kind of terrorism wielded by the slave-power for the purpose of attaining general and absolute sway. To submit to it would have been to transform the Government of the United States into a mere recorder of the behests of a ruling aristocracy. This could not be done without giving up all the essential attributes of the Republic.

The Republican party adopted the other line of policy presented by the above-mentioned alternative. In doing so, it acted upon this theory: The slave-power, in holding out the threat to dissolve the Union, was either in earnest, or it was not. If it was not, then nothing better could be done than to put an end to the terrorism by boldly standing up against the terrorists. And it was, indeed, the general belief in the Republican party that there was more empty bravado than real meaning in the threat; and that, in case of an anti-slavery success in a national election, the fire-eaters would hardly dare to launch into a secession movement, or, at all events, that they would find it difficult to carry the people of the South with them. How far the preparation for the rebellion had already progressed, at that time, was probably known only to the leaders of the movement.

But if the threat was, indeed, serious, the following things were to be taken into consideration:

1. The co-operation of the Northern Democrats with the Southern leaders, in holding up the prospect of disunion as the great bugbear to intimidate the Northern people, was certainly encouraging the "fire-eaters" to persevere in their purpose. The worst thing that could be done was to make the latter believe that they would be aided and supported in their treasonable design by a large number of friends in the North. If the Southern leaders had any

swaddling clothes fluttering round his limbs. [Great cheers.] Is it so difficult to understand the bellicose humor of the South? When a coward falls in with a greater coward than he, or with a man that is even dead,

doubt of the practicability of their scheme, the attitude of the Northern Democracy was apt to remove these doubts.

2. The Southern leaders, whenever they preached secession to their own people, did so avowedly upon the supposition that the people of the North would not dare to offer any resistance to the movement, that the "Yankee would not fight." They promised to their people the establishment of a Southern Confederacy by the quiet process of peaceable separation.

Now it is quite generally understood, and has been frequently admitted, even in the South, that had not the secessionists counted upon a powerful co-operation on the part of their friends in the North, had they not believed that the Northern people were greatly afraid of them, had they anticipated that "the Yankees" would show such a unanimity in their willingness to fight for the Union, the secession movement would not have been attempted, or, at least, it would have been impossible for the secession leaders to draw the people of the South into the vortex.

The best policy, therefore, for the people of the Free States to pursue, was to present a bold and solid front to the pro-slavery element; to try to convince the Southern people that there was an overwhelming sentiment in the North against the arrogations of the slave-power; that the threat of disunion was considered a contemptible attempt to terrorize a spirited people; that this attempt would, henceforth, be treated with disdain; that a disunion movement, if indeed undertaken, would be sternly resisted by the united North; and, finally, that "the Yankee would fight."

If then, as was believed, the disunion cry was a mere empty threat, it was easily shown in its nothingness, and the terrorism was at an end; or, if it was a serious thing, we were likely, by a strong demonstration of a determined will and unity of sentiment, on the part of the North, to convince the Southern people that secession would be for them a most perilous undertaking; and that, if they understood their own interest, it was best for them to abandon the idea. At all events, this was the only policy which could vindicate the dignity of the people, save the spirit of our institutions, and rescue the future development of the Republic from the absolute control of the slave-power. Such were the considerations which dictated the language of the speaker in the above passage, and wherever he had occasion to express his opinions on the subject. (See below, St. Louis speech, page 147.)

That such demonstrations did not have the desired effect upon the people of the South, was owing principally to the following circumstances: The leaders of the secession movement were so confident of having the counte-



he is very apt to assume the attitudes of a hero. The history of the world shows few examples of more outspoken bravery than Sir John Falstaff's when he found Percy Hotspur dead as a mouse on the field of battle. [Laughter and applause.] But let Percy move one of his fists and you will see Sir John nimbly taking to his legs. [Continued laughter and cheers.] As long as the North was as tame as a chicken, the South was as overbearing as a bull-dog. But things have changed since. The North begins to understand the policy: *Si vis pacem para bellum!* in good English: to impudent fellows show your teeth! and you will see the result. [Great cheers.]

The history of the last four years, and especially that of the Kansas struggle, has shown the mighty colonels and generals of the South two great things: first, that the North can and will unite against the progress of slavery, and that some of the Slave States are becoming unreliable; and, second, *that the Yankee will fight!* [Cheers.] Aye, that the descendants of those men who fought in 1776, will fight now and again! [Applause.] And, further, that there is a solid column of German and Scandinavian anti-slavery men here, who know how to handle

nance and co-operation of the Democratic party in the Northern States, that nothing said or done by the Republicans could weaken their belief. They were assured by their friends in the North that the coercion of seceded States would not be attempted. They had reasons to rely upon the sympathy of Mr. Buchanan, then President of the United States, who, in many respects, seemed indeed to justify their expectations. And thus they calculated, that the people of the loyal States, abandoned by their own government, would be neither willing nor able to fight. All these suppositions proved erroneous, and it was certainly not the fault of the Republicans that they were entertained. One thing is eminently probable, nay, certain: if the threat of disunion had from the beginning been treated by every Northern man with becoming indignation and contempt, and if the South had been made to understand the North on that matter, no secession movement would ever have taken place. Slavery would have been gradually reduced and extinguished, as designed by the statesmen of the Revolutionary period. — C. S.



a musket, and who will fight too. [Repeated cheers.] Let them come on, then, the bragging cavaliers of the South! The Northern roundheads stand just ready for them. [Thundering applause.] Calm your warlike enthusiasm; if they are wise, they will not come. The first attempt at a forcible dissolution of the Union will show them the madness of the undertaking.

What will the South do then, if this policy prevails? I do not say that the slaveholders will at once submit, cheerfully and gracefully. They will certainly give their lungs a hearty exercise in the finest figures of speech, and in the most brilliant exclamations. They will predict fearful things, although they may not be over nice concerning the time when these fearful things are going to happen. [Laughter and cheers.] But after a while will they not stop and listen to what the North may have to say? Suppose, then, the North were to speak to them as follows: Friends, we love and esteem you as citizens of a common country. As citizens, you enjoy every right that we enjoy, and whatever legitimate ambition you entertain, there is an open field for it, in this our common Republic. But, as we claim no privileges for ourselves, we are unwilling to concede any to others. If you want to curb our necks under the yoke of your peculiar notions; if you want to adapt the laws of the land to the sole purpose of the protection of the slaveholding interest; if you make any pretensions, or claim any superiority, as a slaveholding aristocracy, you will expose yourselves to grievous disappointment. There is a solid phalanx arrayed against the arrogations of slavery beyond the limits which the Constitution and history have assigned to it. Now, this is your choice: Either govern this Republic with us, as citizens on perfectly equal terms, or, as a slaveholding aristocracy, submit to the doom of

a hopeless minority. Here is strife and disappointment—there is peace and prosperity; choose. [Cheers.]

Do you not think that such words will be apt to make them stop and consider; such words accompanied, perhaps, by the sullen thunder of an earthquake beneath their very feet? They will certainly not abolish slavery at once. They will not suddenly cast off that singular chain of ideas which has bound them to the old order of things. For, do not forget that interest is with them not the only, and, perhaps, not even the most powerful, advocate of slavery. It cannot have escaped you that the slavery question is with them a question of aristocratic pride; that they look down upon the plebeians of the North with a certain contempt, and want to rule the government of their States and the Federal Government also, not as mere citizens, but as *slaveholders*. It is the pride of an aristocracy, the ambition of a caste. Against these, mere argument is no available weapon. Vain pride and ambition are fed and grow upon concessions, and there is nothing that will disarm them but the evident impossibility of their gratification. When slaveholders see their aristocratic pretensions put down by firm majorities, and when they can no longer escape the conviction, that their aspirations to rule the country as slaveholders meet with universal contempt, they will be more apt to listen to the voice of reason, which, at the same time, is the voice of their true interest. After the blinding influence of those ruling passions has been paralyzed by irrevocable events, then, and not till then, will the true moral and economical merits of slavery be fairly investigated and thoroughly understood in the slaveholding States. Discovering that they are an isolated anomaly in the wide world, the slaveholders will find themselves obliged to conform their condition to the spirit of the age. Discovering that there are other more

productive and far more honorable sources of wealth than laziness feeding upon slave-labor, they will sacrifice old prejudices to a new spirit of enterprise, and repeated trials will produce substitutes for slave-labor, where hitherto the latter has been deemed indispensable. Whatever depravity the system of slavery may have entailed upon its devotees, the people of the South are neither devoid of noble impulses nor of the elements of common sense. Rather than kill their time in mourning over the ruins of departed glory, they will try to found new fortunes on a new order of things. And the non-slaveholding whites—now a degraded class of beings—will speedily rise to the rank of active citizens, carried forward by a general progressive movement. No doubt, slavery will linger some time in the cotton and rice growing States. But even there you will see statesmen at the head of affairs, who, abandoning old pretensions, will rather apologize for its continued existence, than boastingly parade it as the fundamental principle of democratic institutions. [Applause.] And at last that thick fog of prejudice will pass away, which hitherto has veiled from their eyes the sun of true democracy. They will, as if awakening from a dark dream, admire with astonishment the life-spreading warmth of its beams, and the glorious purity of its light. [Great cheers.]

And, at the same time, when slavery ceases to be a power, it will cease to exercise its demoralizing influence upon our national policy. No anti-democratic tendency will any longer rule the government of this country. The people will no longer be distracted and confused by the conflict of antagonistic principles. Our foreign policy will no longer be subservient to the grasping appetites of the slave aristocracy, but to the real interests of the whole country. Our influence with foreign nations will rise in the same measure as they have reason to believe

in the sincerity of our democratic professions. The policy of our political parties will no longer be determined by a sectional minority, and the most venal of our politicians no longer sell themselves to an anti-democratic interest, which will have ceased to be a ruling political power. [Cheers.]

This state of things will, according to my profound conviction, be the consequence of a consistent, peaceable, and successful anti-slavery policy. It will stop extravagant and unwarrantable claims, without interfering with constitutional rights. It will respect the privileges of the States, but it will enforce them in favor of freedom also. It will not try to abolish slavery in the States by Congressional interference, or by the force of arms. But it will give strong encouragement and moral support to progressive reforms within them, and will sap the roots of the institution by reducing it to live on its own merits. It will not endanger the safety of the Union, but it will perpetuate it by strengthening its true foundations. [Applause.]

I love this Union, and no man can be more opposed to its dissolution; not as though the free North depended upon her bankrupt partner, but because I think that the connection of the Slave States with the free North is the only thing which prevents the former from entirely losing the last remnant of democratic spirit, and from abandoning themselves without restraint to the current of a despotic tendency. [Cheers.] Let our opponents fret and threaten—I fear nothing. The question, how the Union can be preserved, may, indeed, seem a difficult one to them. But did they ever consider how infinitely more difficult is the question how to dissolve it? And yet, there is one great and real danger to the Union; it is, that by abandoning the great principles of the Revolution, it might miss the very aims and ends for which it was instituted. [Cheers.]

It is not without a profound meaning that the several States of this Union are represented by stars on the national banner. As in our solar system on high the great central sun keeps the planets in their several orbits in sublime and eternal order, so in the solar system of our Union the stars of the States move around a central sun of pure light and irresistible attraction. This central sun is true democratic liberty. As long as that stands firm and unshaken, its whole sphere will move in serene glory. But take that away, annihilate that great centre of attraction, and where hitherto has been the sublime order of a planetary system, there chaotic confusion will reign supreme, and the fondest hopes of the world will perish in destructive concussions. [Loud and long-continued applause.]



## II.

### POLITICAL MORALS.

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SPEECH DELIVERED AT ALBANY-HALL, MILWAUKEE,  
ON THE 18<sup>TH</sup> OF NOVEMBER, 1858.

*The meeting at which this speech was delivered, was called for the purpose of celebrating the success gained by the Republican party at the fall election of 1858, in the First Congressional District of Wisconsin, and particularly in the county and city of Milwaukee. The Democratic party had always had an overwhelming majority in the latter locality; but some of its leading members, especially men in official positions, had indulged in corrupt practices, which led to a change of feeling among the rank and file of the party, and rendered the success of the Republican candidates possible. These are the circumstances alluded to in those passages of the speech which treat of political morality. The change was particularly great among the voters of German nativity, and the speaker had been very active in bringing about this result.*

GENTLEMEN :—

I did not come here for the purpose of receiving your applause for what little I may have contributed to the result of the late election. It is no affected modesty on my part when I say there are many men here, who, in a quiet way, have done and effected much more than myself; and, although I thank my friends for the good opinion they entertain of my services, yet I do not thank them for the distinction they make, and for the exclusive praises they bestow upon me, while others have so richly deserved them. I simply did a freeman's duty, and so did you, every one in his way. Let no unjust discriminations be made, which might wound the feelings of deserving



men, while they cannot fail to embarrass those for whose gratification they are intended. Equal honor to every brave man who stood to his gun in the battle! [Cheers.] Honor to the members of the American Press, who have faithfully worked for the good cause, day after day. Honor to the members of the German Republican Press, who, fighting in the minority, have, for years and years, sacrificed the comforts of life, and struggled with difficulties unknown to most of you, until, at last, they found a reward for their labors in the victories of our cause. [Applause.]

We have, indeed, achieved a surprising success in this city. But, glorious as it was, I warn my Republican friends not to mistake its meaning. It was, indeed, a most hearty endorsement of our noble representative in Congress, and a crushing verdict against the corrupt party organization which so long has ruled the destinies of this district; but the glorious majority we gained, was not a mere partizan majority; the victory we achieved, was not a mere partizan victory. It was the victory of political honesty over corruption; was the victory of moral independence over moral servitude, of manhood over servile partizanship! [Great applause.] Glory enough for the Republicans, that the voice of political independence spoke in their favor.

I know, and you all know, how this great result has been attained. It was the German vote which defeated you so often; it is the German vote that gives us now so brilliant a victory. [Cheers.] I know my countrymen, and I think I understand the true meaning of their action. I indeed have often enough endeavored to plant convictions in the place of their prejudices; but now I see that I was merely giving words to the true thoughts of my countrymen; that I merely gave an expression to their real feelings. [Cheers.] Yes, *they are* shaking off the

yoke of Hunkerism, which endeavored to degrade them to mere voting machines; they *are* breaking through the enslaving drill and discipline of the false Democracy.

But now, after having preached the true principles of American liberty to the Germans, you must allow me to explain the real feelings of my countrymen to the Americans. I entreat you, let not this victory lead you into the dangerous delusion, that the Germans, after having shaken off the yoke of one party despotism, are ready to take upon their necks the yoke of another. [Cheers.] After having raised the banner of moral independence to-day, they are certainly not prepared to surrender it again to-morrow. They will follow the lead of political honesty, as long as it is true honesty that leads them. [Cheers.] They have stood up for the defence of the principles of liberty, and they will remain true to that cause, so long as it is genuine and true liberty which claims their support. But I tell you, my Republican friends, and I speak with the full earnestness of my heart, I sincerely hope that my countrymen who have emancipated themselves from party despotism, will never again consent to be made use of in corrupt combinations and political tricks, that they never will again be parties to dirty political trades and corrupt bargains, *on whatever side they may be attempted*. [Great applause.] And I do not hesitate to prophesy, that if the Republican party should be unfortunate enough to entangle itself in the same net-work of corruption with which the Democracy is choking itself to death, the people will strike it down with the same crushing verdict, under which Hunkerism is sinking now. And in that case, I confess my heart would behold with grief and sorrow its degradation, but it would have no tears for its defeat. [Applause.]

Such predictions will never be fulfilled as long as the Republicans keep in mind, that it requires an honest party

to defend great principles with success, and that in order to preserve the liberties of this country and to carry out the great ideas of the fathers, it is indispensably necessary to raise the standard of political morals. [Cheers.]

The decline and decay of political morals is not owing to the more or less accidental circumstance that a number of corrupt men rose to influence and power. The real cause is, that the political action of the masses was not dictated and ruled by their consciences. [Cheers.]

When you look over the history of that party, which, for a long series of years, has shaped the destinies of the Union, you will discover that its organization is of a hierarchical and despotic character, and that its policy does not spring from the heart of the people. You must discover, that its frequent changes of principles and platforms have not arisen from spontaneous and corresponding changes in public opinion, but that they have been imposed upon the masses of the party by a foreign will, and that the masses have been but obeying the arbitrary dictation of a few superiors. Thus you see the Democratic party of the North slide, with the greatest facility, within a few years, from extreme to extreme—from the Wilmot Proviso to the most atrocious doctrines of the Dred Scott decision. How was this effected, and what was the consequence? The means was the fiercest party despotism, and the consequence was the deepest demoralization of the popular conscience. [Cheers.] People were taught that they had to sacrifice their principles to the party, and with their principles they sacrificed their moral independence and their moral worth. [Great applause.]

Indeed, what man has the right to call himself a regular Democrat now-a-days? Has he, who once with the leaders of the party, held the Missouri Compromise as sacred and inviolable as the Constitution itself? Has he, who once, with General Cass, deplored that he had no opportunity

to record his vote for the Wilmot Proviso? Has he, who once stood upon the Wisconsin platform of 1849, or who shortly after subscribed to General Cass's Nicholson letter? or he, who, in 1854, cheered for Douglas's new doctrine, that the Missouri restriction was unconstitutional, but that the people of a territory should have the power to admit or exclude slavery, even in a territorial condition? Or he, who shortly afterwards limited this right to exclude slavery to the time when the people of a territory formed a State Constitution? Or he, who now subscribes to the doctrine of the Dred Scott decision, that the right of property in a slave is originally and expressly affirmed by the Federal Constitution, and that slavery has an unlimited sway over all the property of the United States? Is he a Democrat, who to-day condemns the reopening of the slave trade as an outrageous wrong, or will he be a Democrat that will assert to-morrow that, a slave being an ordinary article of merchandize, we have no right to limit the freedom of trade in that article? He certainly is no Democrat who has stood faithful and true to any one of these principles, however loudly he may have professed them. But he is a regular Democrat who has successively endorsed every one of them, who has jumped from one platform on another, without scruple or hesitation, and who was always ready to swear that the leaders of "the party" were right whatever they might command, and that the whole world besides was wrong. [Great applause.] He is a "regular Democrat" who is readiest in yielding the most slavish obedience to superior dictation. The true party test of Democracy is neither the Nebraska Bill nor the Dred Scott decision; it is unconditional submission and ever ready obedience. [Loud and continued applause.] How is this? Is it probable that a man should have been truly and deeply convinced of the truth of any one of these principles, if he

was always ready to abandon it for another? Is it possible that those who changed leading doctrines as easily as they changed their clothes, should have cared for principle at all? Could it be true conviction that ruled them? And if it was not conviction that ruled them, what concern could their consciences have in their politics?

Oh, what a sight is this! In the old world I saw the spirit of noble nations subdued by the bayonets of hireling armies. I have seen their battalions, themselves formed of the children of the people, shoulder their muskets and march against their own friends and brothers, the defenders of their common rights and liberties; but it was not their choice to do so, for the terror of command overawed their hearts, and brutal necessity directed their steps. And I have seen other thousands sacrifice all they had, and fight and suffer and die, in order to bequeath to the people the right to express their true convictions and their free-will at the ballot-box, and for no other cause has humanity struggled more, and for no other has more of the noblest blood of mankind been shed. To see the efforts of a liberty-loving nation crushed down by brute violence is a spectacle that fills our soul with sadness, but we do reverence to those who perish in their noble attempts. More deplorable still, because less honorable, is the lot of those who are forced to fight against their own rights and their own liberty; they are the victims of despotism, without being the champions of freedom. But what feelings have our hearts, what designation has our language, for those who, in a free country like this, unfettered by any kind of despotism, with no terror to overawe and no force to coerce them, sacrifice their convictions and their consciences to a moral tyranny of their own making? [Cheers.] And these we find in our midst. Do not try to disguise the fact. There are no bayonets here against convictions. There is no power here that could prevent



the lowest child of the people from having a will and convictions of his own, and from expressing them freely. Every one is the sovereign master of his own self. And yet how many are there who immolate their consciences, their convictions, all their moral independence, on the altar of a savage idol, whose name is "Party!" [Great cheers.] How many submit to a thralldom, which is the more shameful as it is unsupported by force, and rests only on the slavish propensities of its devotee! [Applause.]

Is it not so? Are not the real feelings of the masses trampled upon with impunity, and public opinion treated with contempt? Are not the most atrocious constitutional doctrines imposed upon the people with as much arbitrariness as that with which the despots of the old world impose ukases on their subjects? And yet the rank and file of "the party" stifle the warning voice of conscience, and obey, obey, obey! [Loud applause.] Do not call that rebellion, which recently broke out in the camp, an indication of moral independence. What is it, but that one pretender rises against another, each eager to wield the rod of command alone? What is it, but that, as in the play of Capuletti and Montechi, the house of Douglas rises against the house of Buchanan, the white rose fights the red, an antipope fighting against the pope, but both trying to rule their clients and followers with the same rule, and to whip them in with the same whip? Who is the greater despot of the two? Does not Douglas, on the one side, dictate principles in the same absolute way that Buchanan does on the other? It is nothing but double-headed despotism. [Loud cheers.] Those who were sincerely fighting for principle will have to leave the party. The South will soon declare her sovereign pleasure, the greedy courtiers will crowd the antechamber of the victor, and order will reign in Warsaw. [Applause.]

Such is the party which has stood so long at the helm



of affairs. Its history and its present condition are full of instruction for the people; for not the politicians, but the masses who supported them, are responsible for the curse of demoralization which that party has brought upon us. [Cheers.]

It is said that there are but few men, who, however honest otherwise, can withstand the seductions of power. If this is true, what effect must it have on political leaders, when they see that, in point of principle and political doctrine, they can do with the masses whatever they please? When they find out that they will be obeyed and applauded whatever their commands may be? That there is no somerset so glaring, no sophistry so absurd, and no doctrine so atrocious, but that the rank and file will accept them? That they may sell themselves, and sell others, without being rebuked? That they may even squander the money and rob the treasury of the people, without being held to account? Nay, that their very depravity gives them a claim on the protection of their party? Let me tell you, that not only the politicians debauch the conscience of the people by contempt of principle, but that the masses demoralize the politicians by culpable indulgence. [Great cheers.] Yes, when that party put an honest man in office, they did all they could in order to make a rascal out of him, while he was in power [loud applause]; and the virtue of many a man has thus been victimized by his constituency. And when, at last, such a man had become a downright scoundrel, he did in his turn all he could to demoralize those who had made him so. We might call this Democratic reciprocity, and it is in full operation everywhere. [Tremendous applause.]

Where this course would lead, if the masses persevered in it, I do not know. But I do know that there is no remedy, unless we put the axe to the roots of the evil, and I

consider this one of the most important parts of the mission of Republicanism. It must be our principal object, not only to catch the people's votes for our candidates, but enlist in our cause the people's conscience. [Great cheers.] We must encourage moral independence in politics; we must admonish every man to think and to reason for himself, to form his own convictions, and to stand by them; we must entreat him never to accept, unseen and uninvestigated, the principles and opinions of others, even if they be our own. Let those who follow your lead, believe in your words, because what you say is true, and not because you say it. [Applause.] Do not object that this will loosen the party organization and destroy its efficiency. For our cause is great, and the principles of Republicanism stand on the firm ground of the rights of man. The closer they are investigated, the clearer they stand in the open light of day, the more invincible they are. If what you say is true, you need no tricks and deception in order to make people believe. Address yourselves to their moral nature, and their conscience will enlighten their understanding. [Loud applause.] Then you will organize the party of independent men. This independence will keep the rank and file vigilant, and this vigilance will keep the leaders upright and honest. It will put an end to the omnipotence of wire-pulling, and nip republican Hunkerism in the bud. [Loud applause.] I know it will require incessant work to keep up something like discipline in that party, but it will be an object worth working for; for such an organization will never become a mere tool in the hand of selfish ambition, and its discipline will never degenerate into a mere machinery of despotism. I know that volunteers sometimes will not fight as well as regular troops, and that drill will sometimes beat enthusiasm. But enthusiasm also may be disciplined, and then it will be irresistible. [Cheers.]

I have no faith in the wisdom of that policy of expediency which consists in forming alliances with heterogeneous elements, and in compromising leading principles for the sake of gaining numerical strength. [Cheers.] Temporary successes may, indeed, be achieved by such operations, and short-sighted men who consider themselves eminently practical, may glory in their exploits. But they are only too apt to forget, that serious moral defeats have sometimes been suffered in apparent victories, and moral victories have been won in apparent defeats. And both will bear their fruits in the future. [Loud applause.] It may soon turn out that, what by such expedients they may have gained in point of numbers to-day, they have lost in moral strength for all the future. Our leaders must not forget that we are not working merely for the sake of overthrowing an administration, or of achieving some temporary successes to-day and to-morrow, but that our true end, which consists in setting a limit to the slave-power and the demoralization of political life, will require our united efforts for years to come. They ought never to forget, that ours is a party of volunteers who act on principle and conviction, and that nothing tends so much to break up such a party as that fickle policy which shifts from expedient to expedient, from alliance to alliance, from compromise to compromise. [Cheers.] A party like ours can never be ruled by secret diplomacy. [Loud applause.] Our true strength consists in the honest confidence of the people, which cannot but be endangered by secret combinations, however ingenious and clever they may be. As for me, I believe in an open and straightforward fight. [Cheers.] I believe that even in politics honesty is the best policy. [Loud applause.] I believe in the possibility of reforming our political life, and I will tell you how I think you can do it.

It is true we cannot expect every Republican to be a perfect angel. Even when advocating the purest principles, a man will not at once cast off all the frailties of human nature; and so it may happen, and, I am sorry to say, it has happened, that some Republicans, in the discharge of official duties, fell victims to severe temptations. But one thing we can do, we must do, and we shall do. We must not hesitate to denounce every member of our own party who prostitutes his trust and power by dishonest and corrupt transactions, as a contemptible villain. [Loud applause.] And not only that, we must consider and denounce and treat him as a traitor to his party! [Thundering cheers.] What we can and must do, is to make all dishonest and corrupt practices high treason, and to take every such traitor and pitch him overboard [applause]; to condemn him to political death without regard to person or station, without the benefit of clergy. [Long and continued cheers.] That is the way to stem the flood of demoralization among the people and among the politicians, and to root out that most alarming, that most hideous popular notion—a notion horrible in its consequence, which has been started and fostered by the speculating demagogues—the notion that a politician who is not knave enough to steal must necessarily be a fool! [Loud cheers.] To a corrupt Republican let no other alternative be presented but to be buried in the grave of infamy and oblivion, or to go over to the other side, where such knaves thrive and prosper. [Tremendous applause.]

Republicans, if you claim the right to be severe on your opponents, you must be no less severe against yourselves. Let the Republican organization be a permanent investigating committee, watching its own members, and let it be understood that, if it is not a sufficient excuse for a scoundrel to be a Democrat, a scoundrel is, in your

eyes, ten times more damnable if he pretends to be a Republican. [Loud applause.] Although you may not be perfect, yet you will show by your acts that you are honestly endeavoring to do your best, while, on the other side, corruption stalks abroad with the disgusting impudence of a prostitute who delights in exhibiting her vices naked to the world. I repeat it, and I cannot impress it upon your minds too strongly, or too solemnly: our liberties and the honor and prestige of this Republic *cannot* be preserved, unless you raise the standard of political morals, and this is the way to do it. In the place of every hypocrite unmasked, of every rascal struck down by your hands, ten honest men will flock to your banner. [Loud applause.]

This is the policy which our principles demand. If we follow it sincerely and faithfully, then the light of truth will soon pierce even the thickest darkness of Egypt. [Cheers.] The revolution has begun, and I greet its first symptoms with heartfelt satisfaction; whether it will have an unimpeded progress depends in a large measure upon those who, by these first upheavings of the popular spirit, have been carried into responsible positions.

Let me entreat our republican legislators elect, never to forget that they have not been elected by a strict party vote; that they are, indeed, expected to stand true to their party, but only so long as the party is true to the cause of liberty and honesty. [Loud applause.] Let them never forget that the trust imposed upon them is of unusual importance; upon their shoulders rest the destinies of a State, whose reputation is tainted by venal legislatures and administrations, and whose credit is ruined by legislative blunders. Let them never forget that in a society organized like ours, stability of legislation is the principal safeguard of public credit, [Cheers,]



and that, whatever changes in our laws may be desirable, vested rights and existing contracts must be religiously respected. [Loud and continued applause.] Let them never forget that true economy does not consist in close parsimony alone, but in a wise and appropriate application of the moneys expended. [Cheers.] Let our legislators and county officers bear in mind that it may be easy to gain the confidence of the people, but difficult to preserve it, and that they will be held responsible for the result of the next election. In one word, let this celebration of one of the most surprising successes ever achieved, be solemnized by a deeper consciousness of our duties and responsibilities. [Cheers.]

A last word, my friends. I cannot deny an expression to the feeling of joy with which I am beholding a sight, for which my heart has longed years and years. It is the honest and liberty-loving German joining hands with the honest and liberty-loving American. [Thundering and long-continued applause.] Look over this broad land; at Philadelphia, Cincinnati, Chicago, St. Louis, aye, and Milwaukee, also, the Germans, together with the Americans, crowding around the banner of human liberty! See there the old Germanic idea showing its true identity in all the branches of the good old Germanic stock. [Loud cheers.] Let the bond of this wedlock be sacred and inviolable! Your interests are the same, and in your inmost hearts your principles are the same—why should you not be true to each other? Let this alliance spread and flourish all over this State, all over this Republic—and the cause of liberty will triumph and our honor will be safe! [Long and continued applause.]



### III.

## TRUE AMERICANISM.

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SPEECH DELIVERED IN FANEUIL-HALL, BOSTON, ON  
THE 18TH OF APRIL, 1859.

*The speaker had been invited to Boston to participate in a public dinner on the anniversary of Jefferson's birth-day. Several prominent gentlemen of Massachusetts arranged for him a public reception in Faneuil-Hall, which took place a few days after the Jefferson dinner, Hon. Henry Wilson, United States Senator, presiding. The speech was made in response to the introduction by Senator Wilson. The line of argument pursued in the speech was not without a special object. The Legislature of Massachusetts had adopted an amendment to the Constitution of the State, by which foreigners should not be permitted to vote until two years after they had become citizens of the United States. This amendment, generally known as the "two-years'-amendment," was to be voted upon by the people. It was one of the measures brought forth by the so-called "Know-nothing" or "American" movement, which for a few years had been sweeping all over the United States. It was against this spirit of proscription for the sake of birth, creed, or opinion, styling itself "Americanism," that the speaker directed his arguments.*

MR. PRESIDENT AND GENTLEMEN :—

A few days ago I stood on the cupola of your State-house, and overlooked for the first time this venerable city and the country surrounding it. Then the streets, and hills, and waters around me began to teem with the life of historical recollections, recollections dear to all mankind, and a feeling of pride arose in my heart, and I said to myself, I, too, am an American citizen. [Applause.] There was Bunker Hill, there Charlestown, Lexington,

and Dorchester Heights not far off; there the harbor into which the British tea was sunk; there the place where the old liberty-tree stood; there John Hancock's house; there Benjamin Franklin's birth-place—and now I stand in this grand old hall, which so often resounded with the noblest appeals that ever thrilled American hearts, and where I am almost afraid to hear the echo of my own feeble voice;—oh, sir, no man that loves liberty, wherever he may have first seen the light of day, can fail on this sacred spot to pay his tribute to Americanism. And here, with all these glorious memories crowding upon my heart, I will offer mine. I, born in a foreign land, pay my tribute to Americanism? Yes, for to me, the word Americanism, *true* Americanism, comprehends the noblest ideas which ever swelled a human heart with noble pride. [Applause.]

It is one of the earliest recollections of my boyhood, that one summer night our whole village was stirred up by an uncommon occurrence. I say our village, for I was born not far from that beautiful spot where the Rhine rolls his green waters out of the wonderful gate of the Seven Mountains, and then meanders with majestic tranquillity through one of the most glorious valleys of the world. That night our neighbors were pressing around a few wagons covered with linen sheets and loaded with household utensils and boxes and trunks to their utmost capacity. One of our neighboring families were moving far away across a great water, and it was said that they would never again return. And I saw silent tears trickling down weather-beaten cheeks, and the hands of rough peasants firmly pressing each other, and some of the men and women hardly able to speak when they nodded to one another a last farewell. At last the train started into motion, they gave three cheers for *America*, and then in the first gray dawn of the morning I saw them wending their way over the hill until they disappeared in the shadow

of the forest. And I heard many a man say, how happy he would be, if he could go with them to that great and free country, where a man could be himself. [Applause.]

That was the first time that I heard of America, and my childish imagination took possession of a land covered partly with majestic trees, partly with flowery prairies, immeasurable to the eye, and intersected with large rivers and broad lakes—a land where everybody could do what he thought best, and where nobody need be poor, because everybody was free.

And later, when I was old enough to read, and descriptions of this country and books on American history fell into my hands, the offspring of my imagination acquired the colors of reality, and I began to exercise my brain with the thought what man might be and become, when left perfectly free to himself. And still later, when ripening into manhood, I looked up from my school-books into the stir and bustle of the world, and the trumpet-tones of struggling humanity struck my ear and thrilled my heart, and I saw my nation shake her chains in order to burst them, and I heard a gigantic, universal shout for Liberty rising up to the skies; and at last, after having struggled manfully and drenched the earth of Fatherland with the blood of thousands of noble beings, I saw that nation crushed down again, not only by overwhelming armies, but by the dead weight of customs and institutions and notions and prejudices, which past centuries had heaped upon them, and which a moment of enthusiasm, however sublime, could not destroy; then I consoled an almost despondent heart with the idea of a youthful people and of original institutions clearing the way for an untrammelled development of the ideal nature of man. Then I turned my eyes instinctively across the Atlantic Ocean, and America and Americanism, as I fan-

cied them, appeared to me as the last depositories of the hopes of all true friends of humanity. [Applause.]

I say all this, not as though I indulged in the presumptuous delusion that my personal feelings and experience would be of any interest to you, but in order to show you what America is to the thousands of thinking men in the old world, who, disappointed in their fondest hopes and depressed by the saddest experience, cling with their last remnant of confidence in human nature, to the last spot on earth where man is free to follow the road to attainable perfection, and where, unbiassed by the disastrous influence of traditional notions, customs, and institutions, he acts on his own responsibility. They ask themselves: Was it but a wild delusion when we thought that man has the faculty to be free and to govern himself? Have we been fighting, were we ready to die, for a mere phantom, for a mere product of a morbid imagination? This question downtrodden humanity cries out into the world, and from this country it expects an answer.

As its advocate I speak to you. I will speak of Americanism as the great representative of the reformatory age, as the great champion of the dignity of human nature, as the great repository of the last hopes of suffering mankind. I will speak of the ideal mission of this country and of this people.

You may tell me that these views are visionary, that the destiny of this country is less exalted, that the American people are less great than I think they are or ought to be. I answer, ideals are like stars; you will not succeed in touching them with your hands. But like the seafaring man on the desert of waters, you choose them as your guides, and following them you will reach your destiny. I invite you to ascend with me the watchtower of history, overlooking the grand panorama of the development of

human affairs, in which the American Republic stands in so bold and prominent relief.

He who reviews the past of this country in connection with the history of the world besides, cannot fail to discover a wonderful coincidence of great events and fortunate circumstances, which were destined to produce everlasting results, unless recklessly thrown away by imbecile generations.

Look back with me four or five centuries. The dark period of the middle ages is drawing near its close. The accidental explosion of that mysterious black powder, discovered by an obscure German monk, is the first flash of lightning preluding that gigantic thunder-storm which is to shatter the edifice of feudal society to pieces. The invention of gunpowder strips the feudal lord of his prestige as a *warrior*; another discovery is to strip him of his prestige as a *man*! Guttenberg, another obscure German, invents the printing-press, and as gunpowder blows the castles of the small feudal tyrants into the air, so the formidable artillery of printed letters batters down the citadels of ignorance and superstition. [Loud applause.] Soul and body take up arms and prepare themselves for the great battle of the Reformation. Now the mighty volcano of the German mind bursts the crust of indolence which has covered it. Luther's triumphant thunder rattles against the holy see of Rôme. [Applause.] The world is ablaze, all the elements of society are rising up in boiling commotion—two ages are battling against each other.

This is the time, when the regeneration of the old world is to take place. But the old order of things, fortified in customs and prejudices and deeply-rooted institutions, does not surrender at the first blast of trumpets. The grand but fearful struggle of the reformatory movement plunges all Europe into endless confusion. The



very wheel of progress seems to grind and crush one generation after another. The ideas which concerned the highest and most sacred relations of humanity, seem at the same time to call into their service the basest and most violent passions of the human heart, and in all Europe the wars of great principles degenerate into wars of general devastation.

But, meanwhile, a new country has opened its boundless fields to those great ideas, for the realization of which the old world seems no longer to be wide enough. It is as though the earth herself had taken part in the general revolution, and had thrown up from her sea-covered womb a new battle-ground for the spirit of the new era. That is America. Not only the invention of gunpowder and of the printing-press, but also the discovery of America, inaugurates the modern age.

There is the new and immense continent. The most restless and enterprising elements of European society direct their looks towards it. First, the greediness of the gold-hunting adventurer pounces upon the new conquest; but his inordinate appetites being disappointed, he gradually abandons the field to men in whose hearts the future of the new world is sleeping, unborn.

While the coast of Virginia is settled by a motley immigration, led and ruled by men of ideas and enterprise, the sturdiest champions of principle descend upon the stony shores of New England. [Applause.] While the southern colonies are settled under the auspices of lordly merchants and proprietaries, original democracy plants its stern banner upon Plymouth Rock. [Applause.] Mercantile speculation, aristocratic ambition, and stern virtue that seeks freedom and nothing but freedom, lead the most different classes of people, different in origin, habits and persuasion, upon the virgin soil, and entrust to them the task of realizing the great principles of the age. Nor is



this privilege confined to one nationality alone. While the Anglo-Saxon takes possession of New England, Virginia and Pennsylvania, the Frenchman plants his colonies on the soil of French Florida and the interior of the continent; the Hollander locates New Netherlands on the banks of the Hudson; the Swede, led there by the great mind of Oxenstiern, occupies the banks of the Delaware; the Spaniard maintains himself in Peninsular Florida, and a numerous immigration of Germans, who follow the call of religious freedom, and of Irishmen, gradually flowing in, scatters itself all over this vast extent of country. Soon all the social and national elements of the civilized world are represented in the new land. Every people, every creed, every class of society has contributed its share to that wonderful mixture out of which is to grow the great nation of the new world. It is true, the Anglo-Saxon establishes and maintains his ascendancy, but without absolutely absorbing the other national elements. They modify each other, and their peculiar characteristics are to be blended together by the all-assimilating power of freedom. This is the origin of the American nationality, which did not spring from one family, one tribe, one country, but incorporates the vigorous elements of all civilized nations on earth. [Applause.]

This fact is not without great importance. It is an essential link in the chain of historical development. The student of history cannot fail to notice that when new periods of civilization break upon humanity, the people of the earth cannot maintain their national relations. New ideas are to be carried out by young nations. From time to time, violent, irresistible hurricanes sweep over the world, blowing the most different elements of the human family together, which by mingling reinvigorate each other, and the general confusion then becomes the starting-point of a new period of progress. Nations which

have long subsisted exclusively on their own resources, will gradually lose their original vigor, and die the death of decrepitude. But mankind becomes young again by its different elements being shaken together, by race crossing race, and mind penetrating mind. [Applause.]

The oldest traditions of history speak of such great revulsions and general migrations, and if we could but lift the veil, which covers the remotest history of Asiatic tribes, we should discover the first scenes and acts of the drama, of which the downfall of the Roman empire is a portion. When that empire had exhausted its natural vitality, the dark forests of the North poured forth a barbarous but vigorous multitude, who trampled into ruins the decrepit civilization of the Roman world, but infused new blood into the veins of old Europe, grasping the great ideas of Christianity with a bloody but firm hand—and a new period of original progress sprang out of the seeming devastation. The German element took the helm of history. But, in the course of time, the development of things arrived at a new turning-point. The spirit of individualism took possession of the heart of civilized humanity, and the reformatory movement of the sixteenth century was its expression. But continental Europe appeared unable to incorporate the new and progressive ideas growing out of that spirit, in organic political institutions. While the heart of Europe was ravaged by a series of religious wars, the Anglo-Saxons of England attempted what other nations seemed unable to accomplish. But they also clung too fast to the traditions of past centuries; they failed in separating the Church from the State, and did not realize the cosmopolitan tendency of the new principle. Then the time of a new migration was at hand, and that migration rolled its waves towards America. [Applause.] The old process repeated itself under new forms, milder and more congenial to the humane ideas it represented. It is now

not a barbarous multitude pouncing upon old and decrepit empires; not a violent concussion of tribes accompanied by all the horrors of general destruction; but we see the vigorous elements of all nations, we see the Anglo-Saxon, the leader in the practical movement, with his spirit of independence, of daring enterprise, and of indomitable perseverance; the German, the original leader in the movement of ideas, with his spirit of inquiry and his quiet and thoughtful application; the Celt, with the impulsive vivacity of his race; the Frenchman, the Scandinavian, the Scot, the Hollander, the Spaniard, and Italian—all these peaceably congregating and mingling together on virgin soil, where the backwoodsman's hatchet is the only battle-axe of civilization; led together by the irresistible attraction of free and broad principles; undertaking to commence a new era in the history of the world, without first destroying the results of the progress of past periods; undertaking to found a new cosmopolitan nation without marching over the dead bodies of slain millions. Thus was founded the *great colony of free humanity*, which has not old England alone, but the *world*, for its mother-country. [Cheers.]

This idea is, perhaps, not palatable to those who pride themselves on their unadulterated Anglo-Saxondom. To them I have to say, that the destinies of men are often greater than men themselves, and that a good many are swerving from the path of glory by not obeying the true instincts of their nature, and by sacrificing their mission to one-sided pride. [Applause.]

The Anglo-Saxon may justly be proud of the growth and development of this country, and if he ascribes most of it to the undaunted spirit of his race, we may not accuse him of overweening self-glorification. He possesses, in an eminent degree, the enviable talent of acting when others only think; of promptly executing his own

ideas, and of appropriating the ideas of other people to his own use. [Applause.] There is, perhaps, no other race that, at so early a day, would have founded the stern democracy of the Plymouth settlement, no other race that would have defied the trials and hardships of the original settler's life so victoriously. No other race, perhaps, possesses in so high a degree not only the daring spirit of independent enterprise, but at the same time the stubborn steadfastness necessary to the final execution of great designs. The Anglo-Saxon spirit has been the locomotive of progress [applause]; but do not forget, that this locomotive would be of little use to the world, if it refused to draw its train over the iron highway, and carry its valuable freight towards its destination; that train consists of the vigorous elements of all nations; that freight is the vital ideas of our age; that destination is universal freedom and the ideal development of man. [Cheers.] That is the true greatness of the Anglo-Saxon race; that ought to be the source of Anglo-Saxon pride. I esteem the son who is proud of his father, if, at the same time, he is worthy of him.

Thus, I say, was founded the colony of free humanity on virgin soil. The youthful elements which constitute people of the new world, cannot submit to rules which are not of their own making; they must throw off the fetters which bind them to an old decrepit order of things. They resolve to enter the great family of nations as an independent member. And in the colony of free humanity, whose mother-country is the world, they establish *the Republic of equal rights, where the title of manhood is the title to citizenship*. [Applause.] My friends, if I had a thousand tongues, and a voice strong as the thunder of heaven, they would not be sufficient to impress upon your minds forcibly enough the greatness of this idea, the overshadowing glory of this result. This

was the dream of the truest friends of man from the beginning; for this the noblest blood of martyrs has been shed; for this has mankind waded through seas of blood and tears. There it is now; there it stands, the noble fabric in all the splendor of reality.

They speak of the greatness of the Roman Republic! Oh, sir, if I could call the proudest of Romans from his grave, I would take him by the hand and say to him, Look at this picture, and at this! The greatness of the Roman Republic consisted in its despotic rule over the world; the greatness of the American Republic consists in the secured right of man to govern himself. [Applause.] The dignity of the Roman citizen consisted in his exclusive privileges; the dignity of the American citizen consists in his holding the natural rights of his neighbor just as sacred as his own. [Continued applause.] The Roman Republic recognized and protected the *rights of the citizen*, at the same time disregarding and leaving unprotected the *rights of man*; Roman citizenship was founded upon monopoly, not upon the claims of human nature. What the citizen of Rome claimed for himself, he did not respect in others; his own greatness was his only object; his own liberty, as he regarded it, gave him the privilege to oppress his fellow-beings. His democracy, instead of elevating mankind to its own level, trampled the rights of man into the dust. The security of the Roman Republic, therefore, consisted in the power of the sword; the security of the American Republic rests in the equality of human rights! [Loud applause.] The Roman Republic perished by the sword; the American Republic will stand as long as the equality of human rights remains inviolate. [Cheers.] Which of the two Republics is the greater — the Republic of the Roman, or the Republic of *man*?

Sir, I wish the words of the Declaration of Independ-



ence, "that all men are created free and equal, and are endowed with certain inalienable rights," were inscribed upon every gate-post within the limits of this Republic. From this principle the Revolutionary Fathers derived their claim to independence; upon this they founded the institutions of this country, and the whole structure was to be the living incarnation of this idea. This principle contains the programme of our political existence. It is the most progressive, and at the same time the most conservative one; the most progressive, for it takes even the lowliest members of the human family out of their degradation, and inspires them with the elevating consciousness of equal human dignity; the most conservative, for it makes a common cause of individual rights. [Tumultuous applause.] From the equality of rights springs identity of our highest interests; you cannot subvert your neighbor's rights without striking a dangerous blow at your own. And when the rights of one cannot be infringed without finding a ready defence in all others who defend their own rights in defending his, then, and only then, are the rights of all safe against the usurpations of governmental authority.

This general identity of interests is the only thing that can guarantee the stability of democratic institutions. Equality of rights, embodied in general self-government, is the great moral element of true democracy; it is the only reliable safety-valve in the machinery of modern society. There is the solid foundation of our system of government; there is our mission; there is our greatness; there is our safety; there, and nowhere else! This is true Americanism, and to this I pay the tribute of my devotion. [Long and loud applause.]

Shall I point out to you the consequences of a deviation from this principle? Look at the Slave States. There is a class of men who are deprived of their natural



rights. But this is not the only deplorable feature of that peculiar organization of society. Equally deplorable is it, that there is another class of men who keep the former in subjection. That there are slaves is bad; but almost worse is it, that there are masters. Are not the masters freemen? No, sir! Where is their liberty of the press? Where is their liberty of speech? Where is the man among them who dares to advocate openly principles not in strict accordance with the ruling system? They speak of a republican form of government—they speak of democracy, but the despotic spirit of slavery and mastership combined pervades their whole political life like a liquid poison. They do not dare to be free, lest the spirit of liberty become contagious. The system of slavery has enslaved them all, master as well as slave. [Applause; “true!”] What is the cause of all this? It is that you cannot deny one class of society the full measure of their natural rights without imposing restraints upon your own liberty. If you want to be free, there is but one way; it is to guarantee an equally full measure of liberty to all your neighbors. There is no other.

True, there are difficulties connected with an organization of society founded upon the basis of equal rights. Nobody denies it. A large number of those who come to you from foreign lands are not as capable of taking part in the administration of government as the man who was fortunate enough to drink the milk of liberty in his cradle. And certain religious denominations do, perhaps, nourish principles which are hardly in accordance with the doctrines of true democracy. There is a conglomeration on this continent of heterogeneous elements; there is a warfare of clashing interests and unruly aspirations; and with all this, our democratic system gives rights to the ignorant and power to the inexperienced. And the billows of passion will lash the sides of the ship, and the

storm of party warfare will bend its masts, and the pusillanimous will cry out—"Master, master, we perish!" But the genius of true democracy will arise from his slumber, and rebuke the winds and the raging of the water, and say unto them—"Where is your faith?" Aye, where is the faith that led the fathers of this republic to invite the weary and burdened of all nations to the enjoyment of equal rights? Where is that broad and generous confidence in the efficiency of true democratic institutions? Has the present generation forgotten that true democracy bears in itself the remedy for all the difficulties that may grow out of it?

It is an old dodge of the advocates of despotism throughout the world, that the people who are not experienced in self-government, are not fit for the exercise of self-government, and must first be educated under the rule of a superior authority. But at the same time the advocates of despotism will never offer them an opportunity to acquire experience in self-government, lest they suddenly become fit for its independent exercise. To this treacherous sophistry the fathers of this republic opposed the noble doctrine, that liberty is the best school for liberty, and that self-government cannot be learned but by practising it. [Loud applause.] This, sir, is a truly American idea; this is true Americanism, and to this I pay the tribute of my devotion. [Cheers.]

You object that some people do not understand their own interests? There is nothing that, in the course of time, will make a man better understand his interests than the independent management of his own affairs on his own responsibility. You object that people are ignorant? There is no better schoolmaster in the world than self-government, independently exercised. You object that people have no just idea of their duties as citizens? There is no other source from which they can derive a just no-

tion of their duties, than the enjoyment of the rights from which they arise. You object that people are misled by their religious prejudices, and by the intrigues of the Roman hierarchy? Since when have the enlightened citizens of this Republic lost their faith in the final invincibility of truth? Since when have they forgotten that if the Roman or any other church plants the seed of superstition, liberty sows broadcast the seed of enlightenment? [Applause.] Do they no longer believe in the invincible spirit of inquiry, which characterizes the reformatory age? If the struggle be fair, can the victory be doubtful? As to religious fanaticism, it will prosper under oppression; it will feed on persecution; it will grow strong by proscription; but it is powerless against genuine democracy. [Applause.] It may indulge in short-lived freaks of passion, or in wily intrigues, but it will die of itself, for its lungs are not adapted to breathe the atmosphere of liberty. [Prolonged applause.] It is like the shark of the sea; drag him into the air, and the monster will perhaps struggle fearfully and frighten timid people with the powerful blows of his tail, and the terrible array of his teeth, but leave him quietly to die and he will die. [Hearty applause.] But engage with him in a hand to hand struggle even then, and the last of his convulsions may fatally punish your rash attempt. Against fanaticism genuine democracy wields an irresistible weapon—it is *Toleration*. Toleration will not strike down the fanatic, but it will quietly and gently disarm him. But fight fanaticism *with* fanaticism, and you will restore it to its own congenial element. It is like Antæus, who gained strength when touching his native earth.

Whoever reads the history of this country calmly and thoroughly, cannot but discover that religious liberty is slowly but steadily rooting out the elements of superstition, and even of prejudice. It has dissolved the war

of sects, of which persecution was characteristic, into a contest of abstract opinions, which creates convictions without oppressing men. By recognizing perfect freedom of inquiry, it will engender among men of different belief that mutual respect of true convictions, which makes inquiry earnest, and discussion fair. It will recognize as supremely inviolable, what Roger Williams, one of the most luminous stars of the American sky, called the sanctity of conscience. Read your history, and add the thousands and thousands of Romanists and their offspring together, who, from the first establishment of the colonies, gradually came to this country, and the sum will amount to many millions; compare that number with the number of Romanists who are now here, and you will find that millions are missing. Where are they? You did not kill them; you did not drive them away; they did not perish as the victims of persecution. But where are they? The peaceable working of the great principles which called this Republic into existence, has gradually and silently absorbed them. True Americanism, toleration, the equality of rights, has absorbed their prejudices, and will peaceably absorb everything that is not consistent with the victorious spirit of our institutions. [Cheers.]

Oh, sir, there is a wonderful vitality in true democracy, founded upon the equality of rights. There is an inexhaustible power of resistance in that system of government, which makes the protection of individual rights a matter of common interest. If preserved in its purity, there is no warfare of opinions which can endanger it — there is no conspiracy of despotic aspirations that can destroy it. But if not preserved in its purity! There are dangers which only blindness can not see, and which only stubborn party prejudice will not see.

I have already called your attention to the despotic

tendency of the slaveholding system. I need not enlarge upon it; I need not describe how the existence of slavery in the South affected and demoralized even the political life of the Free States; how they attempted to press us, you and me, into the posse of the slave-catcher by that abominable act, which, worse than the "alien and sedition laws," still disgraces our statute-book; how the ruling party, which has devoted itself to the service of that despotic interest, shrinks from no violation of good faith, from no adulteration of the constitutional compact, from no encroachment upon natural right, from no treacherous abandonment of fundamental principles. And I do not hesitate to prophesy, that if the theories engendered by the institution of slavery be suffered to outgrow the equalizing tendency of true democracy, the American Republic will, at no distant day, crumble down under the burden of the laws and measures which the ruling interest will demand for its protection, and its name will be added to the sad catalogue of the broken hopes of humanity.

But the mischief does not come from that side alone; it is in things of small beginning, but fearful in their growth. One of these is the propensity of men *to lose sight of fundamental principles, when passing abuses are to be corrected.*

. Is it not wonderful how nations who have won their liberty by the severest struggles, become so easily impatient of the small inconveniences and passing difficulties, which are almost inseparably connected with the practical working of general self-government? How they so easily forget that rights may be abused, and yet remain inalienable rights? Europe has witnessed many an attempt for the establishment of democratic institutions; some of them were at first successful, and the people were free, but the abuses and inconveniences connected with liberty became at once apparent. Then the ruling classes of



society, in order to get rid of the abuses, restricted liberty; they did, indeed, get rid of the abuses, but they got rid of liberty at the same time. You heard liberal governments there speak of protecting and regulating the liberty of the press; and, in order to prevent that liberty from being abused, they adopted measures, apparently harmless at first, which ultimately resulted in an absolute censorship. Would it be much better if we, recognizing the right of man to the exercise of self-government, should, in order to protect the purity of the ballot-box, restrict the right of suffrage?

Liberty, sir, is like a spirited housewife; she will have her whims, she will be somewhat unruly sometimes, and, like so many husbands, you cannot always have it all your own way. She may spoil your favorite dish sometimes; but will you, therefore, at once smash her china, break her kettles, and shut her out from the kitchen? Let her practise, let her try again and again, and even when she makes a mistake, encourage her with a benignant smile, and your broth will be right after a while. [Laughter.] But meddle with her concerns, tease her, bore her, and your little squabbles, spirited as she is, will ultimately result in a divorce. What then? It is one of Jefferson's wisest words that "he would much rather be exposed to the inconveniences arising from too much liberty, than to those arising from too small a degree of it." [Immense applause.] It is a matter of historical experience, that nothing that is wrong in principle can be right in practice. [Sensation.] People are apt to delude themselves on that point; but the ultimate result will always prove the truth of the maxim. A violation of equal rights can never serve to maintain institutions which are founded upon equal rights. [Loud applause.] A contrary policy is not only pusillanimous and small, but it is senseless. It reminds me of the soldier who, for fear of



being shot in battle, committed suicide on the march; or of the man who would cut off his foot, because he had a corn on his toe. [Laughter.] It is that ridiculous policy of premature despair, which commences to throw the freight overboard when there is a suspicious cloud in the sky.

Another danger for the safety of our institutions, and perhaps the most formidable one, arises from the general propensity of political parties and public men to act on a policy of mere expediency, and to sacrifice principle to local and temporary success. [Great sensation.] And here, sir, let me address a solemn appeal to the consciences of those with whom I am proud to struggle side by side against human thralldom.

You hate kingcraft, and you would sacrifice your fortunes and your lives in order to prevent its establishment on the soil of this Republic. But let me tell you that the rule of political parties which sacrifice principle to expediency, is no less dangerous, no less disastrous, no less aggressive, of no less despotic a nature, than the rule of monarchs. Do not indulge in the delusion, that in order to make a government fair and liberal, the only thing necessary is to make it elective. When a political party in power, however liberal their principles may be, have once adopted the policy of knocking down their opponents instead of voting them down, there is an end of justice and equal rights. [Applause.] The history of the world shows no example of a more arbitrary despotism, than that exercised by the party which ruled the National Assembly of France in the bloodiest days of the great French Revolution. I will not discuss here what might have been done, and what not, in those times of a fearful crisis; but I will say that they tried to establish liberty by means of despotism, and that in her gigantic struggle against the united monarchs of Europe, revolutionary France won the victory, but lost her liberty.

Remember the shout of indignation that went all over the Northern States when we heard that the border ruffians of Kansas had crowded the free-state men away from the polls and had not allowed them to vote. That indignation was just, not only because the men who were thus terrorized were free-state men and friends of liberty, but because they were deprived of their right of suffrage, and because the government of that territory was placed on the basis of force, instead of equal rights. Sir, if ever the party of liberty should use their local predominance for the purpose of disarming their opponents instead of convincing them, they will but follow the example set by the ruffians of Kansas, although legislative enactments may be a genteeler weapon than the revolver and bowie knife. [Cheering.] They may perhaps achieve some petty local success, they may gain some small temporary advantage, but they will help to introduce a system of action into our politics which will gradually undermine the very foundations upon which our republican edifice rests. Of all the dangers and difficulties that beset us, there is none more horrible than the hideous monster, whose name is "Proscription for opinion's sake." [Cheers, and cries of "good."] I am an anti-slavery man, and I have a right to my opinion in South Carolina just as well as in Massachusetts. My neighbor is a pro-slavery man; I may be sorry for it, but I solemnly acknowledge his right to his opinion in Massachusetts as well as in South Carolina. You tell me, that for my opinion they would mob me in South Carolina? Sir, there is the difference between South Carolina and Massachusetts. [Prolonged cheering.] There is the difference between an anti-slavery man, who is a freeman, and a slaveholder, who is himself a slave. [Continued applause.]

Our present issues will pass away. The slavery question will be settled, liberty will be triumphant, and other

matters of difference will divide the political parties of this country. What if we, in our struggle against slavery, had removed the solid basis of equal rights, on which such new matters of difference may be peaceably settled? What if we had based the institutions of this country upon a difference of rights between different classes of people? What if, in destroying the generality of natural rights, we had resolved them into privileges? There is a thing which stands above the command of the most ingenious of politicians: *it is the logic of things and events*. It cannot be turned and twisted by artificial arrangements and delusive settlements; it will go its own way with the steady step of fate. It will force you, with uncompromising severity, to choose between two social organizations, one of which is founded upon privilege, and the other upon the doctrine of equal rights.

Force instead of right, privilege instead of equality, expediency instead of principle, being once the leading motives of your policy, you will have no power to stem the current. There will be new abuses to be corrected, new inconveniences to be remedied, new supposed dangers to be obviated, new equally exacting ends to be subserved, and your encroachments upon the natural rights of your opponents now, will be used as welcome precedents for the mutual oppression of parties then. Having once knowingly disregarded the doctrine of equal rights, the ruling parties will soon accustom themselves to consult only their interests where fundamental principles are at stake. Those who lead us into this channel will be like the sorcerer who knew the art of making a giant snake. And when he had made it, he forgot the charm-word that would destroy it again. And the giant snake threw its horrid coils around him, and the unfortunate man was choked to death by the monster of his own creation.

On the evening of the 2d day of November, 1855, there stood on this very platform a man, known and loved by every true son of Massachusetts, who, unmoved by the whirlwind of proscriptive movement howling around him, spoke the following words:—

“It is proposed to attain men for their religion, and also for their birth. If this object can prevail, vain are the triumphs of civil freedom in its many hard-fought fields; vain is that religious toleration which we all profess. The fires of Smithfield, the tortures of the inquisition, the proscription of the Non-conformists, may all be revived. Slowly among the struggling sects was evolved the great idea of the equality of all men before the law, without regard to religious belief; nor can any party now organize a proscription merely for religious (and I may add political) belief, without calling in question this unquestionable principle.”

The man who said so was Charles Sumner. [Long-continued applause, and three hearty cheers “for Charles Sumner.”] Then the day was not far off when suddenly the whole country was startled by the incredible news, that his noble head had drooped under the murderous blows of a Southern fanatic, and that his warm blood had covered the floor of the Senate Chamber, the noblest sprinkling that ever fertilized a barren soil. [Laughter and applause.] And now I tell you, when he lay on the lounge of the ante-chamber, his anxious friends busy around him, and his cowardly murderers slinking away like Cain—if at that solemn moment the first question addressed to his slowly returning senses had been: Shall those who support your dastardly assailants with their votes be deprived of their suffrage? he would have raised his bleeding head, and with the fire of indignation kindling in his dim eye, he would have answered: “No! In the name of my country, no! For the honor of Massa-

chusetts, no! For the sake of the principles for which my blood is flowing, no! Let them kill me, but let the rights of man be safe!" [Tremendous applause.]

Sir, if you want to bestow a high praise upon a man, you are apt to say he is an old Roman. But I know a higher epithet of praise; it is—He is a true American! Aye, Charles Sumner is a true American; he is a representative of the truest Americanism, and to him I pay the tribute of my enthusiastic admiration. [Enthusiastic cheering.]

Sir, I am coming to the close of my remarks. But I cannot refrain from alluding to a circumstance which concerns myself. I understand it has been said, that in speaking a few words on the principles of Jeffersonian democracy a few evenings since, I had attempted to interfere with the home affairs of this State, and to dictate to the Republicans their policy. Ah, sir, is there a man in Massachusetts, except he be a servant of the slave-power, who cannot hear me advocate the equal rights of man, without feeling serious pangs of conscience? [Laughter.] Is there a son of this glorious old Commonwealth who cannot hear me draw logical conclusions from the Declaration of Independence—who cannot hear me speak of the natural right of man to the exercise of self-government, without feeling a blush fluttering upon his cheeks? If so, sir, I am sorry for him; it is his fault, not mine. [Loud applause.]

Interfere with your local matters! How could I? What influence could I, an humble stranger among you, exercise on the action of Massachusetts? But one thing I must tell you. It ought never to be forgotten that this old Commonwealth occupies a representative position. Her history is familiar to the nation; even South Carolina knows it. [Laughter and applause.] The nation is so accustomed to admire her glorious deeds for freedom, that



with this expectation their eyes are turned upon her. Massachusetts can do nothing in secret; Massachusetts can do nothing for herself alone; every one of her acts involves a hundred-fold responsibility. What Massachusetts does is felt from the Atlantic to the Pacific. But Massachusetts need only be herself, in order to be great. This is her position among the Free States, recognised by all. Can there be a more honorable one? Sons of Massachusetts, you may be proud of it. Do not forget that from her greatness you cannot separate your responsibility.

No, I will not meddle with your home concerns. I will, however, say a word for the West. Strenuous advocate of individual rights and of local self-government as I am, if you ever hear of any movement in the West against the integrity of the fundamental principles underlying our system of government, I invite you, I entreat you, I conjure you, come one and all, and make our prairies resound and our forests shake, and our ears ring and tingle, with your appeals for the equal rights of man. [Loud and continued cheering.]

Sir, I was to speak on Republicanism at the West, and so I did. This is Western republicanism. These are its principles, and I am proud to say its principles are its policy. These are the ideas which have rallied around the banner of liberty not only the natives of the soil, but an innumerable host of Germans, Scandinavians, Scotchmen, Frenchmen, and a goodly number of Irishmen, also. And here I tell you, those are mistaken who believe that the Irish heart is devoid of those noble impulses which will lead him to the side of justice, where he sees his own rights respected and unendangered. [Applause.] Under this banner, all the languages of civilized mankind are spoken, every creed is protected, every right is sacred. There stands every element of Western society, with en-



thusiasm for a great cause, with confidence in each other, with honor to themselves. This is the banner floating over the glorious valley which stretches from the Western slope of the Alleghanies to the Rocky Mountains—that Valley of Jehoshaphat, where the nations of the world assemble to celebrate the resurrection of human freedom. [Tremendous applause.] The inscription on that banner is not “Opposition to the Democratic party for the sake of placing a new set of men into office;” for this battle-cry of speculators our hearts have no response. Nor is it “Restriction of slavery and restriction of the right of suffrage,” for this—believe my words, I entreat you—this would be the signal of deserved, inevitable and disgraceful defeat. But the inscription is “Liberty and equal rights, common to all as the air of Heaven—Liberty and equal rights, one and inseparable!” [Enthusiastic cheers.]

With this banner we stand before the world. In this sign—in this sign alone, and no other—there is victory. And thus sir, we mean to realize the great cosmopolitan idea, upon which the existence of the American nation rests. Thus we mean to fulfill the great mission of true Americanism—thus we mean to answer the anxious question of down-trodden humanity—“Has *man* the faculty to be free and to govern himself?” The answer is a triumphant “Aye,” thundering into the ears of the despots of the old world that “a man is a man for all that;” proclaiming to the oppressed that they are held in subjection on false pretences; cheering the hearts of the despondent friends of man with consolation and renewed confidence.

This is true Americanism, clasping mankind to its great heart. Under its banner we march; let the world follow. [Loud applause, and three cheers for the champion of freedom in the West.]

## IV.

### THE POPULAR SOVEREIGNTY DOCTRINE.

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SPEECH DELIVERED IN HAMPDEN HALL, SPRINGFIELD,  
MASS., ON THE 4TH OF JANUARY, 1860.

*Not long after the passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Act it became apparent how little this act was calculated to settle the slavery question, or even to allay the excitement of the contest. Within the Democratic party itself angry controversies sprang up concerning the construction to be put upon that measure; Mr. Douglas himself, in consequence of his opposition to the Lecompton Constitution, became involved in a fierce struggle with the Buchanan Administration and the Southern leaders. This had the effect of increasing, for a time at least, his popularity at the North, but as he admitted the doctrine, that slavery could go into a territory without being introduced by local legislation, he remained as obnoxious as ever to the anti-slavery element of the North. Still, many Northern people permitted themselves to be caught by the apparent liberality of Mr. Douglas's doctrines, which were set forth with great plausibility in many of his speeches, and especially in an essay which he brought before the public through Harper's Magazine, and which at the time attracted much attention. The appearance of that essay was the occasion which led to the composition of the speech here presented.*

GENTLEMEN :—

When great political or social problems, difficult to solve, and impossible to put aside, are pressing upon the popular mind, it is a common thing to see a variety of theories springing up, which purport to be unfailing remedies, and to effect a speedy cure. Men who look only at the surface of things, will, like bad physicians, pretend to remove the disease itself by palliating its most violent symptoms, and will astonish the world by their inventive ingenuity, no less than by their amusing assurance. But

a close scrutiny will, in most cases, show that the remedies offered are but new forms of old mistakes.

Of all the expedients which have been invented for the settlement of the slavery question, Mr. Douglas's doctrine of popular sovereignty is certainly the most remarkable, not only by the apparent novelty of the thing, but by the pompous assurance with which it was offered to the nation as a perfect and radical cure. Formerly, compromises were made between the two conflicting systems of labor, separating them by geographical lines. These compromises did indeed produce intervals of comparative repose, but the war commenced again with renewed acrimony, as soon as a new bone of contention presented itself. The system of compromises as a whole proved a failure. Mr. Douglas's doctrine of popular sovereignty proposed to bring the two antagonistic elements into immediate contact, and to let them struggle hand to hand for the supremacy on the same ground. In this manner, he predicted, the slavery question would settle itself in the smooth way of ordinary business. He seemed to be confident of success; but hardly is his doctrine, in the shape of a law for the organization of territories, put upon the statute-book, when the struggle grows fiercer than ever, and the difficulties ripen into a crisis. This does not disturb him. He sends forth manifesto upon manifesto; and even during the State campaign of last fall, he mounts the rostrum in Ohio, in order to show what he can do; and, like a second Constantine, he points his finger at the great principle of "popular sovereignty," and says to his followers: "In this sign you will conquer." But the tendency of events appears unwilling to yield to his prophecy. There seems to be no charm in his command; there is certainly no victory in his sign. He has hardly defined his doctrine more elaborately than ever before, when his friends are routed everywhere,

and his great party is on the point of falling to pieces. The failure is magnificently complete.

There certainly was something in his theories that captivated the masses. I do not speak of those who joined their political fortunes to his, because they saw in him a man who some day might be able to scatter favors and plunder around him. But there were a great many, who, seduced by the plausible sound of the words "popular sovereignty," meant to have found there some middle ground, on which the rights of free labor might be protected and secured, without exasperating those interested in slave labor. They really did think that two conflicting organizations of society, which are incompatible by the nature of things, might be made compatible by legislative enactments. But this delusion vanished. No sooner was the theory put to a practical test, than the construction of the Nebraska Bill became no less a matter of fierce dispute than the construction of the Constitution had been before. Is this pro-slavery, or is it anti-slavery? it was asked. The South found in it the right to plant slave labor in the territories unconditionally, and the North found in it the right to drive slavery out of them. Each section of the country endeavored to appropriate the results of the Nebraska Bill to itself, and the same measure which was to transfer the struggle from the halls of Congress into the territories, transferred it from the territories back into Congress; and there the Northern and the Southern versions of the Nebraska Bill fought each other with the same fury with which the Southern and the Northern versions of the Constitution had fought each other before. What does the Constitution mean in regard to slavery? That question remains to be settled. What does the Nebraska Bill mean? This question depends upon the settlement of the former.

Of all men, Mr. Douglas ought to be the first to know

what the true intent and meaning of the Nebraska Bill and the principle of popular sovereignty is. He is said to be a statesman, and it must be presumed that his measure rests upon a positive idea; for all true statesmanship is founded upon positive ideas.

In order to find out Mr. Douglas's own definition of his own "great principle," we are obliged to pick up the most lucid of his statements as we find them scattered about in numerous speeches and manifestoes. After multifarious cruising upon the sea of platforms and arguments, Mr. Douglas has at last landed at the following point:—

"A slave," says he, in his famous Harper's Magazine article, "a slave, within the meaning of the Constitution, is a person held to service or labor in one State, "*under the laws thereof*" — not under the Constitution of "the United States, or under the laws thereof, nor by "virtue of any Federal authority whatever, but *under the laws of the particular State where such service or labor may be due.*"

This is clear; and with his eyes firmly fixed upon the people of the North, he goes on: "If, as Mr. Buchanan asserts, slavery exists in the Territories by virtue of the "Constitution of the United States, then it becomes the "imperative duty of Congress, *to the performance of which every member is bound by his conscience and his oath, and from which no consideration of policy or expediency can release him*, to provide by law such adequate and complete "protection as is essential to the enjoyment of an important right secured by the Constitution — in one word, to "enact a general slave-code for the Territories."

But Mr. Douglas is not satisfied with this. In order to strengthen his assumption, and to annihilate Mr. Buchanan's construction of the Nebraska Bill still more, he proceeds: "The Constitution being uniform everywhere within the dominions of the United States, and



“being the supreme law of the land, anything in the Constitution or laws of any of the States to the contrary notwithstanding, why does not slavery exist in Pennsylvania, just as well as in Kansas or in South Carolina, by virtue of the same Constitution, since Pennsylvania is subordinate to the Constitution in the same manner and to the same extent as South Carolina and Kansas?”

Just so. Mr. Douglas having been so positive, he cannot deny us the privilege of making a few logical deductions from his own premises. We expect him to proceed in the following manner: “Since a slave is held under the laws of a State, and not under the Constitution or the laws of the United States, *slavery exists only by virtue of local law*,” or, as the Court of Appeals of Kentucky expresses it, “the right to hold a slave exists only by *positive law of a municipal character*, and has no foundation in the law of nature or the unwritten and common law.” If slavery cannot exist except by virtue of local law of a municipal character, it follows, as an irresistible consequence, that a slaveholder cannot hold a slave as property in a territory where there is no local law of a municipal character establishing that right of property. And, further, the right to hold a slave, having no foundation in the law of nature or the unwritten and common law, we are forced to the conclusion that a slave, brought by his owner upon the soil of a Territory before the Territorial Legislature has enacted laws establishing slavery, becomes of necessity free, for there is no local law of a municipal character under which he can be held as a slave. This principle is recognized by the decisions of several Southern courts. Having gone so far (and, indeed, I cannot see how a logical mind can escape these conclusions from Mr. Douglas’s own premises), Mr. Douglas would be obliged to define his popular sovereignty to be the right of the people of a Territory, represented in the Territorial Legis-



lature, to admit slavery by positive enactment, if they see fit, *but it being well understood that a slaveholder has not the least shadow of a right to take his slave property into the Territory before such positive legislation has been had.* This definition would have at least the merit of logical consistency.

But what does Mr. Douglas say? "Slavery," so he tells us in his Harper's Magazine article, "being the creature of local legislation, and not of the Constitution of the United States, it follows that the Constitution does not establish slavery in the Territories *beyond the power of the people to control it by law.*" What? The Constitution does not establish slavery in the Territories beyond a certain something! What does that mean? If slavery is the creature of local law, how can the Constitution, by its own force, permit slavery to go into a Territory *at all?*

Here is a dark mystery — a pit-fall; and we may well take care not to fall into the trap of some sophistry. Why does he not speak of the admission of slavery by positive enactment? Why not even of the power of the people to *exclude* it by law? We look in vain for light in Harper's Magazine (and it is indeed true, what Judge Black intimates, that that article is one of the obscurest documents by which ever a politician attempted to befog his followers), but we may gather Mr. Douglas's real opinion from another manifesto preceding this. In his New Orleans speech, delivered after his recent success in Illinois, he defined his position, in substance, as follows: "The Democracy of Illinois hold that a slaveholder has the same right to take his slave property into a Territory as any other man has to take his horse or his merchandise."

What? Slavery is the creature of local law, and yet a slaveholder has the right to take his slave property into a Territory before any local law has given him that right? A slave does not become free, when voluntarily brought

by his owner upon the soil of a Territory where no positive local law establishing slavery exists? How is this possible? How can even the elastic mind of a Democratic candidate for the Presidency unite these contradictory assumptions? [Applause.] And yet there it stands, and nothing that Mr. Douglas ever said can be more unequivocal in its meaning. And here, again, we may claim the privilege of drawing a few logical deductions from Mr. Douglas's own premises. If, as Mr. Douglas distinctly and emphatically tells us, a slaveholder has a right to take his slave, as property, into a Territory, and to hold him there as property, before any legislation on that point is had, from what source does that right arise? Not from the law of nature, for the right to hold a slave is "unfounded in the law of nature, or in the unwritten and common law;" and even Mr. Douglas, little as he may care about nature and her laws, will hardly dare to assert that the system of slave labor is the natural and normal condition of society. It must, then, spring from positive law. But from what kind of positive law? Not from any positive law of a local and municipal character, for there is none such in the Territory so far. Where is its source, then? There is but one kind of positive law to which the Territories are subject before any local legislation has been had, and *that is the Constitution of the United States*. If, therefore, Mr. Douglas asserts, as he does, that a slaveholder has a right to take his slave, as property, into a Territory, he must, at the same time, admit that, in the absence of local legislation positively establishing slavery, the Constitution of the United States, the only valid law existing there, is the source of that right. What else does Mr. Buchanan assert, but that slavery exists in the Territories by virtue of the Federal Constitution? Where is, then, the point of difference between Mr. Buchanan and Mr. Douglas? Why all this pomp and

circumstance of glorious war? Whence these fierce battles between the Montechi and Capuletti of the Democratic camp? Are ye not brothers? [Cheers.]

But Mr. Douglas is a statesman (so they are all, all statesmen), and pretends that the Constitution does not establish slavery in the Territories, "*beyond the power of the people to control it by law.*" What does that mean? It means that the people of a Territory shall have the power to embarrass the slaveholder in the enjoyment of his right by "unfriendly legislation." "The right to hold slaves," says he, in another place, "is a worthless right, unless protected by appropriate police regulations. If the people of a Territory do not want slavery, they have but to withhold all protection and all friendly legislation." Indeed, a most ingenious expedient.

But, alas! Here is one of those cases where the *abstract* admission of a right is of decisive importance. Suppose, for argument's sake, a slave might escape from his owner in a Territory, without being in actual danger of recapture; would that in any way affect the constitutional right of the slaveholder to the possession and enjoyment of his property? I have already quoted Mr. Douglas's own answer to this question:—

"If," says he, "slavery exists in the Territories by 'virtue of the Constitution' (that is, *if a slaveholder has a right to introduce his 'slave property' where there is no other law but the Constitution*), 'then it becomes the imperative duty of Congress, to the performance of which every member is bound by his oath and conscience, and from which no consideration of policy or expediency can release him, to provide by law such adequate and complete protection as is essential to the enjoyment of that important right.'

And Mr. Douglas, after having emphatically admitted the right of property in a slave, where that right can spring from no other law but the Constitution, then dares

to speak of unfriendly legislation. Where is his conscience? Where is his oath? Where is his honor? [Applause.]

But Mr. Douglas says more:—

“The Constitution being the supreme law of the land, “in the States as well as in the Territories, then slavery “exists in Pennsylvania just as well as in Kansas and in “South Carolina, and the irrepressible conflict is there?”

Aye, the irrepressible conflict *is* there, not only between the two antagonistic systems of labor, but between Mr. Douglas’s own theories; not only in the States and Territories, but in Mr. Douglas’s own head. [Laughter and cheers.] Whatever ambiguous expressions Mr. Douglas may invent, the dilemma stares him in the face—and here I put myself on his own ground: either slavery is excluded from the Territories so long as it is not admitted by a special act of Territorial legislation, or, if a slaveholder has the right to introduce his slave property there before such legislation is had, he can possess that right by virtue of no other but the only law existing there, the Constitution of the United States. Either slavery has no rights in the Territories, except those springing from positive law of a local or municipal character, or, according to Judge Douglas’s own admission, the Southern construction of the Constitution and of the principle of popular sovereignty is the only legitimate one: that the Constitution, by its own force, carries slavery wherever it is the supreme law of the land, that Congress is obliged to enact a slave-code for its protection, and that popular sovereignty means the power of the people to vote *for* slavery, but by no means against it. There is no escape from this dilemma.

Which side will Mr. Douglas take? Will he be bold enough to say that slavery, being the creature of local law only, is excluded from the Territories in the absence of positive law establishing it; or will he be honest

enough to concede that, according to his own proposition in his New Orleans speech, slavery exists in the Territories by virtue of the Federal Constitution? He will neither be bold enough to do the first, nor honest enough to do the second; he will be just bold and honest enough to do neither. [Applause.] He is in the position of that Democratic candidate for Congress in the West, who, when asked, "Are you a Buchanan or a Douglas man?" answered, "I am." [Great laughter and cheers.] If you ask Mr. Douglas, "Do you hold that slavery is the creature of local law, or that the slaveholder has the right to introduce his slave property where there is no local law?" he will answer, "I do." [Continued laughter and applause.]

Such is Mr. Douglas's doctrine of popular sovereignty. But after having given you Mr. Douglas's own definitions in his own words, I see you puzzled all the more, and you ask me again: "What is it?" I will tell you what judgment will be passed upon it by future historians, who may find it worth while to describe this impotent attempt to dally and trifle with the logic of things. They will say: "It was the dodge of a man who was well aware that, in order to be elected President of the United States, the vote of a few Northern States must be added to the united vote of the South. Knowing by experience that the Democratic road to the White House leads through the slaveholding States, he broke down the last geographical barrier to the extension of slavery. So he meant to secure the South. But in conceding undisputed sway to the slaveholding interest, he saw that he was losing his foothold in the Northern States necessary to his election; he availed himself of the irresistible pressure of the free-state movement in Kansas, and opposed the Lecompton Constitution. So he saved his Senatorship in Illinois as the 'champion of free labor.' But the South frowned, and immediately after his vic-



tory he went into the slaveholding States, and admitted in his speeches that slavery may go into the Territories without a special act of Territorial legislation. Believing the South satisfied, and seeing his chances in the North endangered, he wrote his Harper's Magazine essay, assuming that slavery can exist only by virtue of local law. The South frowning again, he endeavored to make his peace with the slaveholders by declaring that he would submit to the Charleston Convention, and instructing his nearest friends in the House to vote for the Administration candidate for the Speakership. So he endeavored to catch both sections of the Union successively in the trap of a double-faced sophistry. He tried to please them both, in trying to cheat them both. But he placed himself between the logic of liberty on one, and the logic of slavery on the other side. He put the sword of logic into the hands of his opponents, and tried to defend himself with the empty scabbard of 'unfriendly legislation.' [Applause.] Unfriendly legislation, which in one case would have been unnecessary, in the other unconstitutional—the invention of a mind without logic, and of a heart without sympathies; recognized on all sides as a mere subterfuge, behind which the moral cowardice of a Presidential candidate entrenched itself." [Cheers.]

Such will be the verdict of future historians. They will indulge in curious speculations about the times when such doctrines could be passed off as sound statesmanship—a statesmanship, indeed, the prototype of which may be found, not in Plutarch, but in Aristophanes—but they will be slow to believe that there were people dull enough to be deceived by it. [Applause.]

Leaving aside the stern repudiation which Mr. Douglas's popular sovereignty has received at the hands of the people at the last State elections all over the Union, it is a characteristic sign of the times, that even one of his



political friends, an Anti-Lecompton Democrat, recently went so far as to declare, on the floor of Congress, that he would not vote for Mr. Douglas, if nominated by the Charleston Convention, unless a clear and unequivocal construction were affixed to the reaffirmation of the Cincinnati platform. A wise precaution, indeed! But whatever construction might be given to the Cincinnati platform, what will that gentleman do with the double-faced platform which Mr. Douglas has laid down for himself? What will the abstract pledge of a Convention be worth to him, if Mr. Douglas's principles pledge him to nothing? What will he do with a man who, when pressed to take an unequivocal position, is always ready to sneak behind a superior authority, declaring that "these are questions to be settled by the courts?" [Laughter and applause.]

Mr. Douglas's situation is certainly a very perplexing one. On one side, he is ostracised by the Administration-Democracy for his illogical and unconstitutional doctrine, that the Legislature of a Territory has control over slavery; and, on the other hand, one of his nearest friends, Mr. Morris, of Illinois, in his recent speech on the President's message, denounces the doctrine, that slave property may be carried into the Territories just like other property, as an atrocious "abomination." Was Mr. Morris not aware that this "abomination" is the identical doctrine advocated by Mr. Douglas in his New Orleans speech? Let Mr. Morris examine the record of Judge Douglas, and he will find out that, whatever abominations Mr. Buchanan may bring forward in his message, he advocates none that is not a direct logical consequence of Mr. Douglas's own admissions.

I see the time coming when many of those who rallied around Douglas's colors, because they believed in his principles, will, from his most devoted friends, become

his most indignant accusers. They are already, unwittingly, denouncing his doctrines, even while trying to defend him; they will not be sparing in direct denunciations as soon as they discover how badly they have been deceived, and how ignominiously they were to be sold. We might, indeed, feel tempted to pity him, if we had not to reserve that generous emotion of our hearts for those who are wrong by mistake and unfortunate without guilt. [Applause.]

Mr. Douglas's ambiguous position, which is to make it possible for him to cheat either the North or the South, without adding a new inconsistency to those already committed, makes it at the same time necessary for him to put his double-faced theories upon an historical basis, which may relieve him of the necessity of expressing a moral conviction on the matter of slavery either way. To say that slavery is right, would certainly displease the North; to say that slavery is wrong, would inevitably destroy him at the South. In order to dodge this dangerous dilemma, he finds it expedient to construe the history of this country so as to show that this question of right or wrong in regard to slavery had nothing whatever to do with the fundamental principles upon which the American Republic was founded. Dealing with slavery only as a matter of fact, and treating the natural rights of man and the relation between slavery and republican institutions as a matter of complete indifference, he is bound to demonstrate that slavery never was seriously deemed inconsistent with liberty, and that the black never was seriously supposed to possess any rights which the white man was bound to respect.

But here he encounters the Declaration of Independence, laying down the fundamental principles upon which the Republic was to develop itself; he encounters the ordinance of 1787, the practical application of those prin-

ciples; both historical facts, as stern and stubborn as they are sublime. But as Mr. Douglas has no logic to guide him in his theories, so he has no conscience to restrain him in his historical constructions. To interpret the Declaration of Independence according to the evident meaning of its words would certainly displease the South; to call it "a self-evident lie" would certainly shock the moral sensibilities of the North. So he recognizes it as a venerable document, but makes the language, which is so dear to the hearts of the North, express a meaning which coincides with the ideas of the South.

We have appreciated his exploits as a logician; let us follow him in his historical discoveries.

Let your imagination carry you back to the year 1776. You stand in the hall of the old Colonial Court-house of Philadelphia. Through the open door you see the Continental Congress assembled; the moment of a great decision is drawing near. Look at the earnest faces of the men assembled there, and consider what you may expect of them. The philosophy of the eighteenth century counts many of them among its truest adepts. They have heartily welcomed in their scattered towns and plantations the new ideas brought forth by that sudden progress of humanity, and, meditating them in the dreamy solitude of virgin nature, they have enlarged the compass of their thoughts, and peopled their imaginations with lofty ideals. A classical education (for most of them are by no means illiterate men) has put all the treasures of historical knowledge at their disposal, and enabled them to apply the experience of past centuries to the new problem they attempt to solve. See others there of a simple but strong cast of mind, whom common sense would call its truest representatives. Wont to grapple with the dangers and difficulties of an early settler's life, or, if inhabitants of young uprising cities, wont

to carry quick projects into speedy execution, they have become regardless of obstacles and used to strenuous activity. The constant necessity to help themselves has developed their mental independence; and, inured to political strife by the continual defence of their colonial self-government, they have at last become familiar with the idea of introducing into practical existence the principles which their vigorous minds have quietly built up into a theory.

The first little impulses to the general upheaving of the popular spirit—the tea tax, the stamp act—drop into insignificance; they are almost forgotten; the revolutionary spirit has risen far above them. It disdains to justify itself with petty pleadings; it spurns diplomatic equivocation; it places the claim to independence upon the broad basis of eternal rights, as self-evident as the sun, as broad as the world, as common as the air of heaven. The struggle of the colonies against the usurping government of Great Britain has risen to the proud dimensions of a struggle of *man* for liberty and equality. Behold, five men are advancing towards the table of the President. First, Thomas Jefferson, whose philosophical spirit grasps the generality of things and events; then, Benjamin Franklin, the great apostle of common sense, the clear wisdom of real life beaming in his serene eye; then, the undaunted John Adams, and two others. Now Jefferson reads the Declaration of Independence, and loudly proclaims the fundamental principle upon which it rests: “All men are created free and equal!” It is said; history tells you what it means. The sceptre of royalty is flung back across the ocean; the prerogatives of nobility are trodden into the dust; every man a king, every man a baron; in seven of the original colonies the shackles of the black man struck off; almost everywhere the way prepared for gradual emancipation. “No recognition of

the right of property in man!" says Madison. "Let slavery be abolished by law!" says Washington. Not only the supremacy of Old England is to be shaken off, but a new organization of society is to be built up, on the basis of liberty and equality. That is the Declaration of Independence! That is the American Revolution. All men free and equal! Not even the broad desert of the Atlantic ocean stops the triumphant shout. Behold, the nations of the Old World are rushing to arms. Bastiles are blown into the dust, as by the trumpets of Jericho, and, like a pillar of fire by night, and a pillar of cloud by day, the great watchword of the American Revolution shows forever the way to struggling humanity. [Long-continued applause.] All men are created free and equal! Whence the supernatural power in these seven words?

Turn your eyes away from the sublime spectacle of 1776, from that glorious galaxy of men whose hearts were large enough for all mankind, and let me recall you to the sober year of 1857. There is Springfield, the capital of Illinois, one of those States which owe their greatness to an ordinance originally framed by the same man whose hand wrote the Declaration of Independence. In the hall of the Assembly, there stands Mr. Douglas, who initiates an eager crowd into the mysteries of "popular sovereignty." He will tell you what it meant, when the men of 1776 said that "all men are created free and equal." He says:

"No man can vindicate the character, the motives, and the conduct of the signers of the Declaration of Independence, except upon the hypothesis that they referred to the white race alone, and not to the African, when they declared all men to have been created free and equal—that *they were speaking of British subjects on this continent being equal to British subjects born and residing in Great Britain*—that they were entitled to the same



"inalienable rights, and among them were enumerated "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. The Declaration of Independence was adopted merely for the purpose of justifying the colonists in the eyes of the civilized world, in withdrawing their allegiance from the "British crown, and dissolving their connection with the "mother-country."

What? Is that all? Is that little heap of quicksand the whole substructure on which a new organization of society was to be built? the whole foundation upon which the proud and ponderous edifice of the United States rests? They did, then, *not* mean *all* men, when they said all men. They intended, perhaps, even to disfranchise those free blacks, who, in five of the original thirteen colonies, enjoyed the right of voting. They meant but the white race. Oh, no! by no means the *whole* white race; not the Germans, not the French, not the Scandinavians; they meant but British subjects: "British subjects on this continent being equal to British subjects born and residing on the other side of the great water!" [Laughter and applause.]

There is your Declaration of Independence, a diplomatic dodge, adopted merely for the purpose of excusing the rebellious colonies in the eyes of civilized mankind. There is your Declaration of Independence, no longer the sacred code of the rights of man, but a hypocritical piece of special pleading, drawn up by a batch of artful pettifoggers, who, when speaking of the rights of man, meant but the privileges of a set of aristocratic slaveholders, but styled it "the rights of man," in order to throw dust into the eyes of the world, and to inveigle noble-hearted fools into lending them aid and assistance. [Applause.] These are your boasted Revolutionary Sires, no longer heroes and sages, but accomplished humbuggers and hypocrites, who said one thing and meant another;

who passed counterfeit sentiments as genuine, and obtained arms and money and assistance and sympathy on false pretences! There is your great American Revolution, no longer the great champion of universal principles, but a mean Yankee trick—[bursts of applause and laughter]—a wooden nutmeg—[renewed cheers]—the most impudent imposition ever practised upon the whole world. [Applause.]

This is the way Mr. Douglas wants you to read and to understand the proudest pages of American history. That is the kind of history with which he finds it necessary to prop his mongrel doctrine of popular sovereignty. That is what he calls vindicating the character and the motives and the conduct of the signers of the Declaration of Independence. Thus did he not blush to slander Jefferson, who, when speaking of his country, meant the world, and, when speaking of his fellow-citizens, meant mankind; and Franklin, in whose clear head theory and practice were the same, and who, having declared "all men to be created free and equal," became the first President of the first great Abolition Society; and John Adams, the representative of that State which abolished slavery within its limits with one great stroke of legislation; and Washington, who declared it to be "his fondest wish to see slavery abolished by law," and affixed to the Declaration of Independence the broad signature of his heroic sword; and Madison, who deemed it "absurd to admit the idea of property in man;" and of the framers of the Constitution, who took care not to disgrace that instrument with the word "slavery," and, before adopting it finally, blotted out from the extradition clause the word "servitude," *avowedly, because it signified the condition of a slave*, and substituted the word "service," *avowedly, because it signified the condition of a freeman*. Thus Mr. Douglas dares to speak of all those true men, who, after having proclaimed

their principles in the Declaration, endeavored to introduce them into practical life in almost every State, in the way of *gradual emancipation*. That they have failed in this, is it a fault of theirs? It shows not that they were less great and sincere, but that subsequent generations were hardly worthy of so noble an ancestry. [Applause.]

There is Mr. Douglas's version of your history. He despairs of converting you without slandering your fathers. His present doctrines cannot thrive, unless planted in a calumny on the past. *He* vindicate the signers of the Declaration of Independence! Indeed, they need it sadly. I see the illustrious committee of five rise from their graves, at their head Thomas Jefferson, his lips curled with the smile of contempt, and I hear him say to Mr. Douglas: "Sir, you may abuse us as much as you please, but have the goodness to spare us with your vindications of our character and motives." [Great laughter and applause.]

It is a common thing for men of a coarse cast of mind so to lose themselves in the mean pursuit of selfish ends, as to become insensible to the grand and sublime. Measuring every character and every event in history by the low standard of their own individualities, applying to everything the narrow rule of their own motives, incapable of grasping broad and generous ideas, they will belittle every great thing they cannot deny, and drag down every struggle of principles to the sordid arena of aspiring selfishness, or of small competing interests. Eighteen hundred years ago, there were men who saw nothing in incipient Christianity but a mere wrangle between Jewish theologians, got up by a carpenter's boy, and carried on by a few crazy fishermen. Three hundred years ago, there were men who saw in the great reformatory movement of the sixteenth century, not the emancipation of

the individual conscience, but a mere fuss kicked up by a German monk who wanted to get married. Two hundred years ago, there were men who saw in Hampden's refusal to pay the ship-money, not a bold vindication of constitutional liberty, but the crazy antics of a man who was mean enough to quarrel about a few shillings. And now, there are men who see in the Declaration of Independence, and the American Revolution, not the reorganization of human society upon the basis of liberty and equality, but a dodge of some English colonists who were unwilling to pay their taxes. [Continued applause.]

But the dignity of great characters and the glory of great events find their vindication in the consciences of the people. [Cheers.] It is in vain for demagogism to raise its short arms against the truth of history. The Declaration of Independence stands there. No candid man ever read it without seeing and feeling that every word of it was dictated by deep and earnest thought, and that every sentence of it bears the stamp of philosophical generality. It is the summing up of the results of the philosophical development of the age; it is the practical embodiment of the progressive ideas, which, very far from being confined to the narrow limits of the English colonies, pervaded the very atmosphere of all civilized countries. That code of human rights has grown on the very summit of civilization, not in the miry soil of a South Carolina cotton-field. He must have a dull mind or a disordered brain, who misunderstands its principles; but he must have the *heart of a villain*, who knowingly misrepresents them. [Loud cheers.]

Mr. Douglas's ambition might have been satisfied with this ignominious exploit. But the necessities of the popular sovereignty doctrine do not stop there. After having tried to explain away the fundamental principles underlying this Republic, which are hostile to slavery

and its extension, Mr. Douglas finds it exceedingly inconvenient to encounter facts which prove, beyond doubt, that these principles, from a mere theoretical existence, rose to practical realization. "Popular sovereignty," which is at war with the doctrines of the Declaration of Independence, demands the slaughter of the ordinance of 1787, and Mr. Douglas is up to the task. He does not stop at trifles.

And here we must return to the Harper's Magazine manifesto. He leads us through a century of colonial history, in order to show that the people of the colonies claimed the right to legislate on the subject of slavery. And, remarkable enough, all the instances quoted show a uniform tendency adverse to the peculiar institution. Mr. Douglas then proceeds to discover the germs of his popular sovereignty doctrine in the first Congressional legislation, concerning the Territories. I will not undertake to criticise that singular historical essay, although some of its statements are such as to make the freshmen of our colleges smile. The "statesman" Douglas does not seem to be aware that the ability to read history ought to precede the attempt to write it. [Laughter and cheers.] He leads us back to the Congress of 1784. Mr. Jefferson and his colleagues have just executed the deed of cession of the North-western Territory, and the same Mr. Jefferson, as chairman of a committee, then submits "a plan for the temporary government of the territories ceded or to be ceded by the individual States to the United States." Mr. Douglas proceeds to describe how the Territorial governments were to be organized, what rights and powers were put into the hands of the people, and how they were to be exercised; and, after having demonstrated that the term "new States" meant the same thing which is now designated by "Territories," he comes to the conclusion that the spirit pervading that plan was



in exact consonance with his doctrine of "popular sovereignty." Mr. Douglas ostentatiously calls this "the Jeffersonian plan." "It was," says he, "the first plan of government for the Territories ever adopted in the United States. It was drawn by the author of the Declaration of Independence, and revised and adopted by those who shaped the issues which produced the Revolution, and formed the foundations upon which our whole system of American government rests." But Mr. Douglas skips rather nimbly over the significant fact, that the same "author of the Declaration of Independence" put into that plan a proviso, *excluding slavery from the Territories*. Was that a mere accident? Mr. Jefferson showed thereby, conclusively, that, in his opinion, the exclusion of slavery by Congressional legislation was by no means inconsistent with the spirit of "popular sovereignty" which Mr. Douglas discovers in the plan of 1784; but this does not disturb Mr. Douglas. "The fifth article," says he, "relating to the prohibition of slavery, having been rejected by Congress, never became a part of the Jeffersonian plan of government for the Territories, as adopted, April 23d, 1784." Although with a large numerical majority in its favor (sixteen to seven), this article did, indeed, fail to obtain a constitutional majority, the vote of New Jersey not being counted, in consequence of there being but one delegate from that State present; yet it had been drawn up by Mr. Jefferson, introduced by Mr. Jefferson, and sustained by Mr. Jefferson's vote. Nevertheless, Mr. Douglas persists in calling a plan, *from which the peculiar Jeffersonian feature had been struck out*, the "Jeffersonian plan." This is indeed the play of Hamlet, with the character of Hamlet omitted. [Laughter.]

"This charter of compact," proceeds Mr. Douglas, "with its fundamental conditions, which were unalterable without the joint consent of the people interested in

them, as well as of the United States, then stood upon the statute-book unrepealed and irrepealable, when, on the 14th day of May, 1787, the Federal Convention met at Philadelphia." Does Mr. Douglas not know that on the 16th of March, 1785, a proposition was introduced in Congress by Rufus King, to exclude slavery from the States described in the resolve of April 23d, 1784, and to make this provision part of the compact established by that resolve? Does he not know that this provision, restoring the Jeffersonian feature to the "Jeffersonian plan," was committed, by the vote of eight States against four? Does he not know that the plan of 1784 never went into practical operation, but was expressly set aside by Congress in 1787? Does he not know that the ordinance of 1787 was the first legislative act ever practically organizing a Territory of the United States, and that one of its most prominent features was the proviso excluding slavery from all the Territories then in possession of the United States?

Mr. Douglas's historical recollections of the ordinance of 1787 seem to be very indistinct. Indeed, he deems it only worthy of an occasional, passing, almost contemptuous notice. He speaks of it as "the ordinance of the 12th of July, 1787, which was passed by the remnant of the Congress of the Confederation, sitting in New York, while its most eminent members were at Philadelphia, as delegates to the Federal Convention." For three-quarters of a century, people were in the habit of thinking that the ordinance of 1787 was an act of the highest order of importance, but we now learn that it was a rather indifferent affair, passed on an indifferent occasion, by an exceedingly indifferent set of fellows, while the plan of 1784, a mere abstract programme, completely overruled by subsequent legislation, is represented as the true glory of the age. How is this? The reason is obvious. Mr. Douglas

belongs to that class of historians who dwell upon those facts which suit their convenience, and unceremoniously drop the rest. I once heard of a Jesuit college where they used a text book of history, in which the French Revolution was never mentioned, while the Emperor Napoleon figured there only as a modest Marquis Bonaparte, who held a commission under Louis XVII., and fought great battles for the glory of the Catholic Church. [Laughter and applause.] So it is with Mr. Douglas and the history of this country. He ignores the universal principles of the Declaration of Independence, and represents the great founders of the Republic as merely paving the way for his "great principle," while a few village politicians get up an obscure ordinance, adverse to the general tendency of things. But as those Jesuits never could prevent their students from peeping out of their college windows into the wide world, where they perceived a very different state of things, so Mr. Douglas cannot prevent us from travelling out of the yellow covers of Harper's Magazine, into the open records of history, where we find Mr. Jefferson's anti-slavery clause, although accidentally lost in 1784, strenuously insisted upon by the leading spirits of the Republic, incorporated in the great act of 1787, solemnly reaffirmed by the first Congress under the Constitution, and firmly maintained even against the petition of the people of one of the Territories. [Cheers.] This is the true "Jeffersonian plan;" the plan which Jefferson framed, voted for, and which was carried out in his spirit; not that mangled report of 1784, which Mr. Douglas wants us to take as the foundation of all Territorial government, because an historical accident happens to coincide with his schemes.

That true Jeffersonian plan rested, indeed, on the principle of popular sovereignty; but it will be conceded that Mr. Jefferson's great principle was as widely different

from that of Mr. Douglas as the ordinance of 1787 is different from the Nebraska Bill. While Mr. Jefferson's notion of popular sovereignty sprang from the idea that man has certain inalienable rights which the majority shall not encroach upon, Mr. Douglas's doctrine rests upon the idea that the highest development of liberty consists in the right of one class of men to hold another class of men as slaves, if they see fit to do so. [Applause.] While Mr. Jefferson excluded slavery from the Territories, *in order to make room for true popular sovereignty*, Mr. Douglas invents his false popular sovereignty, in order to make room for slavery. The ordinance of 1787, the true "Jeffersonian plan," was indeed no mere accident, no mere occasional act of legislation. It sprang from the idea, as Madison expressed it, "that republican institutions would become a fallacy where slavery existed;" and in order to guarantee republican institutions to the Territories, they excluded slavery.

The ordinance of 1787 was the logical offspring of the principles upon which your independence and your Constitution are founded; it is the practical application of the Declaration of Independence to the government of the Territories. Its very existence sets completely at nought Mr. Douglas's doctrine and historical construction, and the dwarfish hand of the demagogue tries in vain to tear this bright page out of your annals. [Cheers.] The ordinance of 1787 stands written on the very gate-posts of the North-western States; written on every grain-field that waves in the breeze, on every factory that dots the course of their rushing waters, on every cottage that harbors thrifty freemen; written in every heart that rejoices over the blessings of liberty. [Long-continued applause.] There it stands, in characters of light. Only a blind man cannot see it; only a fool can misunderstand it; only a knave can wilfully misinterpret it. [Repeated cheers.]

Such is Mr. Douglas's principle of popular sovereignty in its logical and historical aspect; apparently adopting the doctrine that slavery is the creature of local law only, and fighting against a Congressional slave-code, but, on the other hand, admitting the very principle on which protection to slave property becomes a logical necessity; and again assuming the ground that slave property may be introduced where there is no local law, but explaining away the logical consequences of that doctrine by the transparent sophistry of unfriendly legislation; dragging the proudest exploits of American statesmanship into the dust; emasculating the Declaration of Independence, because incompatible with its principles; setting aside the ordinance of 1787, because that stern fact is a conclusive historical argument against it; a Jesuitical piece of equivocation and double-dealing, unable to stand before the criticism of a logical mind, because it is a mixture of glaring contradictions; *unable to stop the war of principles and interests, because it is at war with itself.* [Applause.]

It is true, its principal champion worked hard to cover with bullying boisterousness the moral cowardice from which it sprang; but in vain. He mistakes the motive-power which shapes the actions of free nations. Having no *moral* convictions of his own to stand upon, he could never address himself *to the moral sense of the people.* [Sensation.] Having no moral convictions of his own! This is a grave charge, but I know what I say. I respect true convictions wherever I find them. Among the fire-eaters of the South, there are men who speak of the moral basis of slavery, and believe in it; who speak of the blessings of servitude, and believe in it; who assert that slavery is right, and believe it. Atrocious as their errors may be, and deeply as I deplore them, yet I respect their convictions as soon as I find them to be such. But look into the record of the champion of "popular sovereignty;" scan



it from syllable to syllable ; and then tell me, you Douglasites of the South, do you find one word there indicating a moral conviction that slavery is right? And you Douglasites of the North, who are in the habit of telling us that you are the true anti-slavery men, and that popular sovereignty will surely work the overthrow of slavery, did your master ever utter a similar sentiment? Do you find in his record one word of sympathy with the down-trodden and degraded? One spark of the humane philosophy of our age? One syllable in vindication of the outraged dignity of human nature? One word which might indicate a moral conviction that slavery is *wrong*? Not one!

But one thing he does tell you: "*I do not care whether slavery be voted up or down!*" There is then a human heart that does not care! Sir, look over this broad land, where the struggle has raged for years and years; and across the two oceans, around the globe, to the point where the far West meets the far East; over the teeming countries where the cradle of mankind stood; and over the workshops of civilization in Europe; and over those mysterious regions, under the tropical sun, which have not emerged yet from the night of barbarism to the daylight of civilized life—and then tell me, how many hearts do you find that do not tremble with mortal anguish or exultant joy, as the scales of human freedom or human bondage go up or down? Look over the history of the world, from the time when infant mankind felt in its heart the first throbbings of aspiring dignity, down to our days, when the rights of man have at last found a bold and powerful champion in a great and mighty Republic; where is the page that is not spotted with blood and tears, shed in that all-absorbing struggle; where a chapter which does not tell the tale of jubilant triumph or heart-breaking distress, as the scales of freedom or slavery went up or

down? [Loud applause.] But to-day, in the midst of the nineteenth century, in a Republic whose programme was laid down in the Declaration of Independence, there comes a man to you, and tells you, with cynical coolness, that he does not care! And *because* he does not care, he claims the confidence of his countrymen and the highest honors of the Republic! *Because* he does not care, he pretends to be the representative statesman of this age!

I always thought that he can be no true statesman whose ideas and conceptions are not founded upon profound moral convictions of right and wrong. [Applause.] What, then, shall we say of him who boastingly parades his indifference as a virtue? May we not drop the discussion about his statesmanship, and ask, What is he worth *as a man*? [Repeated cheers.] Yes; he mistakes the motive power which shapes the events of history. I find that in the life of free nations, mere legal disquisitions never turned the tide of events, and mere constitutional constructions never determined the tendency of an age. The logic of things goes its steady way, immovable to eloquence and deaf to argument. It shapes and changes laws and constitutions according to its immutable rules, and those adverse to it will prove no effectual obstruction to its onward march. In times of great conflicts, the *promptings and dictates of the human conscience* are more potent than all the inventive ingenuity of the human brain. The conscience of a free people, when once fairly ruling the action of the masses, will never fail to make new laws, when those existing are contrary to its tendency, or it will put its own construction upon those that are there. Your disquisitions and plausibilities may be used as weapons and stratagems in a fencing-match of contending parties; but, powerless as they are before the conscience of man, posterity will remember them only as mere secondary incidents of a battle of great princi-

ples, in which the strongest motive powers of human nature were the true combatants.

There is the slavery question; not a mere occasional quarrel between two sections of country divided by a geographical line; not a mere contest between two economical interests for the preponderance; not a mere wrangle between two political parties for power and spoils; but the great struggle between two antagonistic systems of social organization; between advancing civilization and retreating barbarism; between the human conscience and a burning wrong. [Cheers.] In vain will our impotent mock giants endeavor to make the test-question of our age turn on a ridiculous logical quibble, or a paltry legal technicality. [Applause.] In vain will they invent small dodges, and call them "great principles;" in vain will they attempt to drag down the all-absorbing contest to the level of a mere pothouse quarrel between two rival candidates for a Presidential nomination. [Applause.] The wheel of progressing events will crush them to atoms, as it has crushed so many abnormities. [Cheers.] And a future generation will perhaps read on Mr. Douglas's tombstone the inscription: "Here lies the queer sort of a statesman, who, when the great battle of slavery was fought, pretended to say that he did not care whether slavery be voted up or voted down." [Cheers.]

But as long as the moral vitality of this nation is not entirely exhausted, Mr. Douglas, and men like him, will in vain endeavor to reduce the people to that disgusting state of moral indifference which he himself is not ashamed to boast of. I solemnly protest that the American people are not to be measured by Mr. Douglas's self-made moral standard. However degraded some of our politicians may be, the progress of the struggle will show that the popular conscience is still alive, and that the people DO CARE! [Long-continued applause.]

## V.

### RATIFICATION OF MR. LINCOLN'S FIRST NOMINATION FOR THE PRESIDENCY.

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SPEECH DELIVERED AT ALBANY HALL, MILWAUKEE,  
ON THE 26TH OF MAY, 1860.

*The meeting at which this speech was delivered was called for the purpose of ratifying the nomination made by the Republican National Convention at Chicago in 1860. Before the Convention met, it was generally expected that a strong effort would be made by certain delegations to carry a platform and to nominate candidates calculated to conciliate, by concessions, the Old Line Whigs and the Know-Nothings. This circumstance is referred to in the opening paragraphs of the speech. The delegation from Wisconsin had been instructed to vote for the nomination of Mr. Seward, who enjoyed an immense popularity in the State, and was then looked upon as the head of the more advanced wing of the Republican party. The news of his defeat in the Convention was received with marks of dissatisfaction by many of his friends, and to the latter the closing appeal of this speech is addressed.*

MR. PRESIDENT AND GENTLEMEN:—

As one of the delegates who had the honor to represent the Republicans of Wisconsin in the National Convention, I feel called upon to give you a brief account of our doings, and of the views which guided us in our course. We have faithfully endeavored to do our duty as we understood it, and I am bold enough to assume that our understanding of it did not differ from yours.

We went there not only for the purpose of subserving the interests of the party, but above all of promoting the interests of our cause.

The question to be solved at Chicago, as we understood it, was not only how we could beat the Democracy, but whether a defeat of the Democracy would be a victory of Republicanism. We do not forget that there are triumphs which are no victories, and that such triumphs, dangerous and treacherous as they always will be, may become even worse than defeats; for, being the triumphs of politicians instead of the cause, they will loosen the moral bonds which hold a party together, and substitute in their place the mere cohesive power of public plunder.

We were well aware that, for some time previous to the meeting of the National Convention, in some Republican newspapers, in speeches, and private circulars, an extreme tenderness was shown for the prejudices and susceptibilities of those who had never acted with us, while much less regard was paid to the feelings and preferences of the Republican masses. We expected to see this policy urged upon the National Convention, and we were determined to present to it a bold and unflinching opposition. [Applause.] For, we thought we appreciated the true element of our strength. We knew that mere drill and discipline, and party dictation would never drive the Republican masses into silent obedience to the mandates of that Convention, if those mandates ran contrary to the popular conscience. We kept in mind that the Republican party had sprung from the indignation of the people aroused by a flagrant breach of trust, and had gained its strength by the uprising of the popular heart for great positive ideas; that it is a party of volunteers held together not by drill and command, but by the moral power of a great common cause [cheers], that by joining the Republican organization, not one of us gave up his moral and political independence; that we did not deed away our consciences in inscribing our names upon its roll; that its claims on our support depend on the hold it has on our convictions,



that its tenure is on good behavior, and that it can not and shall not be ruled by the wily arts of secret diplomacy. [Applause.]

I have heard it said that, in consequence of all this, the Republican party is a very difficult party to be managed—but nothing in the world can be easier, as long as the simple but great truth is kept in view, that the masses will remain true to the Republican party as long as the Republican party remains true to itself. [Great applause.] It was our conviction, that if the Convention should fall into the fatal error of attempting to change the faith and policy of the party, as we would change our dress, it would quickly find out that the Republican party is essentially the party of independent men, that its power rests upon public opinion, and that it can do no wrong with impunity. [Cheers.]

With these ideas uppermost in our minds, we went into that Convention, determined to preserve in its purity the original idea upon which the party was founded; determined never to sell out the moral character and the great future of the Republican cause for the treacherous glitter of plausible combinations, brought about by trade and compromise; determined rather to risk a defeat than to lose our own identity in the chase after a delusive phantom of party success; in one word, determined to have a Republican platform, and upon it a Republican candidate. [Great applause.] I leave it to the people of Wisconsin to decide whether they were misrepresented by their delegates. [Cheers.]

By the partiality of our delegation, I was placed upon the committee on platforms and resolutions. The spirit which animated that committee was that the standard of Republicanism should not be lowered one single inch. [Great applause.] We endeavored to lift the creed of the party far above the level of mere oppositional policy.

The platform gives it a positive character. The Republicans stand before the country, not only as the anti-slavery party, but emphatically as the party of free labor. [Loud cheers.] While penning up slave labor within the limits which the legislation of States has assigned to it, we propose to plant free labor in the Territories by the Homestead Bill, and to promote free labor all over the land by the encouragement of home industry. [Applause.] In throwing its shield over the eternal principles of human rights, the platform presents the anti-slavery policy of the party in its logical connection with the great material interests of the country. *To man, his birthright; to labor, freedom; to him that wants to labor, work and independence; to him that works, his dues.* This is the Republican platform. [Loud and prolonged cheering.]

It affords me special satisfaction to state that the resolutions, the passage of which was recommended by the Republican State Convention of Wisconsin, I mean those concerning the Homestead Bill, and the rights of naturalized citizens, were successfully advocated, and form part of our national creed. [Applause.]

Our platform, adopted without opposition, and almost without discussion—adopted amidst the most spontaneous and sublime outbursts of enthusiasm human eyes ever witnessed, is before the people. It is the boldest, the plainest, the most liberal ever presented to the nation by a political party, and the enthusiastic shouts of millions, from Maine to the Rocky Mountains, have already sanctioned it with their approval. [Cheers.]

Mr. President, the delegates of this State were instructed to cast their votes for the nomination of William H. Seward. It was certainly not for reasons of superior availability that Mr. Seward's name was brought forward. But we were accustomed to look up to him as the intel-

lectual head of the political anti-slavery movement. From him we received the battle-cry in the turmoils of the contest; for he was one of those spirits who sometimes will go ahead of public opinion, instead of tamely following its footprints. He would compress into a single sentence—a single word—the whole issue of a controversy; and those words became the inscriptions on our banners, the pass-words of our combatants. His comprehensive intellect seemed to possess the peculiar power of penetrating into the interior connection and grasping the general tendency of events and ideas, things and abstractions; he charmed our minds with panoramic views of our political and social condition and the problems to be solved; his telescopic eye seemed to pierce even the veil which covers future developments; and while all his acts and words were marked by a thorough-going and uncompromising consistency, they were, at the same time, adorned with the peculiar graces of superior mental culture. [Cheers.]

The same qualities which made him the object of the fiercest and most acrimonious hostility on the part of our opponents, could not fail to assign to him, in the hearts of his friends, a place which hardly another man in the nation could fill. But a popularity like this is not apt to become general. He was one of the earliest champions of our cause. He fought for it, sometimes single-handed and alone, standing firm and unmoved in the storm of fanaticism and vituperation; he fought for it when it was unpopular, and all the prejudice that existed against his principles, all the odium that was cast upon his doctrine, centred upon his person. He was the bugbear with which political children were frightened, and a great many were accustomed to couple with the name of Seward all that was detestable and dangerous. His principles emerged from that cloud of prejudice, but his name did

not, and although a daily increasing number of friends gathered around him, yet a great many could not divest themselves of their early impressions.

And so this became one of the instances, which you so frequently meet with in the history of mankind, in which individuals have to pay a tribute of self-denial to their own greatness. The success of the cause they serve is apt to bring with it the disappointment of their personal aspirations. This is a melancholy fate, but it is no less glorious and sublime, for even the highest positive merit may receive a still higher lustre from the divine anointment of self-sacrifice. [Cheers.] History does not judge men by the outward emblems of power and preferment. The greatest names are those which need no title in order to be great. [Great cheers.] Seward has lost nothing in the Convention. He is to-day, what he was yesterday. He can hardly stand higher; he certainly does not stand lower. [Loud applause.]

We, the delegates from Wisconsin, voted for him to the last. I may say that a few hours after my arrival at Chicago I saw that Seward's nomination was very improbable. I do not lay claim to any particular sagacity for that, for it was a plain arithmetical problem. The causes which brought about his defeat I will not detail; suffice it to say, that they were not of a futile nature. But we stood by him, determined to carry his name as high as possible. Nor did we follow the example of those who changed their votes after the decisive ballot, before the final result was announced; not as though we had been opposed to Mr. Lincoln, than whom there is no truer man in the nation [cheers]; but because we thought we owed it to our old chieftain, that, if fall he must, he should withdraw with the honors of war, surrounded by an unbroken column of true and devoted friends. [Loud cheers.] So the delegations from New York, Wisconsin, and some

delegates from other States stood together to the last. Thus was this debt of honor discharged; we considered it honestly due, and it was honestly paid. [Great applause.]

I need hardly say, sir, that when the motion was made to make Mr. Lincoln's nomination unanimous, we seconded it without any sacrifice of feeling, and, when it was carried, we heartily joined in the general enthusiasm. [Cheers.] We had not gone there, to have our candidate nominated, or none; but with the loyal intention to subordinate our individual judgment to the judgment of the majority, provided the Convention asked of us nothing inconsistent with our consciences as anti-slavery men and the dignity of the Republican cause [cheers]; and I do not hesitate to say that, if Governor Seward had not been in the field, Mr. Lincoln, unless I mistake the temper of our people, would, in all probability, have been the first choice of Wisconsin. Although Governor Seward failed, Mr. Lincoln's nomination nailed the good old Republican banner to the mast as boldly and defiantly as ever. [Prolonged applause.]

Mr. President, I had the honor to be a member of that committee who were to carry to Mr. Lincoln the official announcement of his nomination. The enthusiasm with which we were received at Springfield was boundless. There we saw Mr. Lincoln's neighbors, and it became at once apparent that those who knew him best, loved and esteemed him most. [Cheers.] And then I saw Mr. Lincoln again; for I had met him before in that memorable Senatorial campaign in Illinois, when he, as a man of true and profound convictions, although discountenanced and discouraged by many leading Republicans, who thought it good policy to let Mr. Douglas return to the Senate without opposition, threw himself forward for the imperiled purity of our principles, grasped with a bold hand the Republican banner, which was in danger of sinking



into the mire of compromise and unnatural combinations, and held it up proudly aloft in one of the fiercest struggles the country ever witnessed. [Great applause.] I met him then, in the thick of the fight, when he bearded the lion of demagogism in his den, when the brilliant sallies of his wit and sarcasm drew shouts of delight from the multitude, when the thunderbolts of his invective rattled triumphantly against the brazen front of Stephen A. Douglas [applause], when the lucid, unanswerable logic of his arguments inspired every patriotic heart with new confidence in the justice of our cause, and when, under his powerful blows, the large Democratic majority of Illinois dwindled down to nothing. Then I saw him do what perhaps no other man in the nation would have done. Then I learned to confide in the patriot and the defender of profound convictions, to esteem the statesman, and to love the man. [Great applause.]

And, now, I saw him again, surrounded by the Committee of the National Convention, who had come to lay into his hands the highest honor and the greatest trust which a political party has to bestow—an honor which he had not thought of in his hard-fought battles, which he had not craved, and had hardly been sanguine enough to expect. There he stood silently listening to the address of our chairman; his eyes downcast; in his soul, perhaps, a feeling of just pride struggling with the overawing consciousness of responsibility. Then he answered, thanking them for the honors bestowed upon him, and accepting the leadership in the great struggle, not with the exultant tone of one who has achieved a personal triumph, not with the pompous airs and artificial dignity of one who is conscious of standing upon the great stage of the world, but with that unaffected, modest simplicity of a man who is strong in the consciousness of his ability and his honest intention to do right. [Great cheers.]

Many of those who now surrounded him, had voted for other candidates in the Convention, and some, still laboring under a feeling of personal disappointment, had come there not without some prejudice unfavorable to Mr. Lincoln. But when they saw the man who had worked his way from the humblest station in life to his present eminence, not by fast speculations or adventurous efforts; not on the wings of good luck, but by quiet, steady labor, by unswerving fidelity to principle and his private and public duties, by the vigor of his genius, and by the energy of his character—the man who had won the confidence of the people and was now lifted upon the shield of a great national party, not by ingenious combinations and adroit management, but by the popular instinct—unfettered by promises, unpledged to anybody and anything but the people and the welfare of our country; his hands free to carry out the honest dictates of his pure conscience; a life behind him, not only above reproach, but above suspicion; a problem before him, for the solution of which he was eminently fitted by the native virtues of his character, the high abilities of his mind, and a strong, honest purpose;—then they all felt, that with this pure and patriotic statesman, all those great qualities would return to the White House, which makes republican government what it ought to be,—a government founded upon virtue. [Enthusiastic cheers.] And an Eastern delegate who had voted against him in the Convention, whispered to me in a tone of the highest satisfaction: “Sir, we might have done a more daring thing, but we certainly could not have done a better thing.” [Prolonged applause.]

I cannot find words strong enough to designate the silliness of those who sneeringly affect to see in Mr. Lincoln but a second or third rate man, who, like Polk and Pierce, had been taken up merely for the sake of expe-

diency. Let them ask Mr. Douglas, from whose hands he wrested the popular majority in Illinois; let them ask those who once felt the magic touch of his lucid mind and honest heart; let his detractors ask their own secret misgivings, and in their own fears they will read the cause of the joy and assurance of his friends. [Applause.] They whistle in order to keep up their courage; but, methinks, it is a doleful sound. [Laughter and cheers.] So, then, we stand before the people, with the platform of free labor, and upon it a true representative of free labor as a candidate for the Presidency. On this attitude we challenge our enemies to the battle.

On our flank we are threatened by the Constitutional-Union Nondescript; by that party of dry hearts and dead weights, who recently assembled at Baltimore, and, conscious of their inability to make a platform, adopted a sentence from a Fourth of July oration as their common creed, and will in all probability circulate Mr. Everett's Mount Vernon papers as their principal campaign documents. [Great laughter and cheers.] They know no North, no South, no East, no West, no anything, and least of all they know themselves. [Laughter.] See them march on, ready to charge, but gently and with forbearance, lest they step upon somebody's toes [laughter], and slowly and noiselessly, lest their own soldiers, frightened by their own impetuosity, suspect themselves of sinister designs—for theirs is an army which, by the accidental explosion of a percussion cap, might be thrown into the most frightful disorder. [Great laughter and applause.] It is said that one of their candidates contemplates declining the nomination. Let him well ponder what he is doing. Let him not, with his accustomed rashness in political matters, skip over so awful a responsibility; upon his resolution, so or so, may depend a difference of

five to ten votes at the next national election. [Shouts of laughter and applause.]

In front we face the Democracy. Thanks to the restless impatience of Mr. Douglas's ambition, and to his unscrupulous duplicity, the Democratic party is fast falling to pieces. [Cheers.] Indeed, we are greatly indebted to that man. When, by the Nebraska bill and the invention of the popular sovereignty dodge, he tried to gain the favor of the South, he helped build up the Republican party in the North; and when, by refusing to acknowledge the logical consequences of his own position, he tried to retrieve his fortunes at the North, he disorganized the Democratic party at the South. And even lately he demonstrated the existence of the irrepressible conflict more clearly and forcibly, with due deference to Governor Seward be it said, than ten Rochester speeches could have done. He is like the fellow who, in order to get at the apples that hung rather high, cut down the tree. [Applause.]

Yes, that gentleman has done much of our work, and he did it voluntarily, gratis, for nothing. Let us be honest enough to confess it; for, sir, I really do not see why the Church should refuse to acknowledge its obligations to the devil. [Laughter and cheers.]

Is it not owing to his laudable exertions that the Democracy have opened the campaign with two platforms and no candidate? [Shouts of laughter.] In fact, when taking all his kind services into consideration, I am almost sorry of ever having said anything against him. But the thing is done, and Mr. Douglas must be satisfied with as humble an apology as I am able to offer. [Continued laughter and applause.]

The first attempt of the Democratic party to unite upon a platform and to nominate a candidate failed. It could not but fail as long as some of them insisted on laying

down a party creed that meant something. A Democratic platform in order to be satisfactory, must mean nothing and everything, as the Cincinnati platform did. [Cheers.] But they will try again to repress the irrepressible conflict which rages in their own ranks, and as the day for doing so they have with great propriety chosen the 18th of June, the anniversary of the battle of Waterloo. [Applause.] What the result of that Convention will be, whether one of the contesting factions will carry the day, or whether they will succeed in uniting them, by conceding to one the platform and to the other the candidates, thus cheating each other in attempting to cheat the people, is to me a matter of supreme indifference. The Democrats undoubtedly thought they had done a very smart thing in adjourning their Convention without nominating a candidate, so as to deprive us of the supposed advantage of knowing what antagonist we shall have to deal with. Without being aware of it, they have indeed done a great thing for us; for they have obliged us to rely for success upon the positive strength of our own cause, instead of the accidental weakness of an opposing candidate. [Enthusiastic cheers.] And in this noble and manly attitude we stand before them, the only united National party in the land.

While the Union-savers did not dare to lay down a common party creed, while the Democrats, with unscrupulous duplicity, attempt to commit a new fraud upon the people, the Republican party has with manly fearlessness proclaimed its principles and nominated a candidate who fairly and honestly represents them. We have undertaken to defeat our opponents, not by concession and subterfuge, but by boldly and unequivocally re-asserting the principles in which we believe. We have undertaken to disarm the prejudices that are against us, not by pandering to them, but by opposing to them the language



of truth. No greediness of a speedy party triumph has betrayed us into the abandonment of a single position; no desire to conclude advantageous alliances has betrayed us into a single compromise. I am proud to say, we have disdained to purchase, at the price of a single article of our creed, the support of that small set of amphibious politicians who claim to hold the balance of power, and whose office it seems to have been for years to demoralize parties with their treacherous promises of support [applause], of those heartless men who, when a whole continent is on fire, calculate with bloodless coolness from what side they can draw the greatest advantage. [Cheers.] They may feel big with the vain boast that they will be strong enough to defeat us — we have shown them unequivocally enough, that they will never be strong enough to corrupt us. [Enthusiastic cheers.] We have, indeed, invited the support of all citizens, whatever their party affiliations may have been. But we will not gain it by false pretences. We will speak to them the language of great principles; we will appeal to their sense of right and justice; we will assault their understandings with irrefutable arguments; we will storm their hearts with solemn invocations, but we have disdained to descend to ambiguous tricks, which, by showing that we do not dare to be ourselves, would make us unworthy of being supported by others. [Loud cheers and applause.]

Such is the Republican party of to-day. It is strong, for it seeks and finds its strength in the greatness of the cause it defends. It will be victorious, for it deserves success. Its success will be a decisive triumph of our cause, and if the worst should come, even a defeat would be a mere delay of certain victory. And so we are ready to give battle, armed with that scrupulous jealousy of principle, that will make us rather perish than compromise the right; with that honest pride of conviction

which springs from a deep consciousness of good faith and true devotion to a just cause. [Great applause.] And the signs of the times show that even in politics honesty is the best policy, for all those honest men who mean to do right, although they formerly stood against us, are fast flocking around our banners. [Cheers.]

Sir, I have heard here and there a murmur of disappointment. What! with a cause and a platform like ours? With such standard-bearers as LINCOLN and HAMLIN? It is hardly credible. Listen to me a single moment. Standing as we do on the threshold of great decisions, I cannot suffer my mind to be engaged in the walls of this house, or in the narrow line of party interest and party policy, not even in the boundaries of this country. There is the wide world around us with its manifold races and nations of men, all of them for thousands of years engaged in an arduous struggle for happiness and freedom; now advancing with spasmodic force and rapidity, now falling back again exhausted and discouraged; always struggling to disentangle their feet from the treacherous coils of despotic rule, and always baffled in their efforts; so much noble blood spilled, so many noble hearts broken, so many noble aspirations turned into despair!

And in this world of strife and anguish there arose this Republic—a world of promise. It was the gospel of liberty translated into fact. It was to be the beacon of humanity. [Cheers.] But, alas! the abolition of despotic rule did not work the abolition of the baser passions of human nature. But half a century elapses and this free government is ruled by a despotic interest; the Republic sinks into the mire of slavery and corruption, sinks deeper and deeper, and the hope of humanity sinks with it. The advocates of despotism predict its downfall from day to day, and proclaim with exultation that

the great experiment of human self-government has failed. It is in vain that the best men of the nation, like the prophets of old, rise up against the growing demoralization. They are sneered at and persecuted, or, at best, their efforts remain isolated and apparently fruitless. Suddenly a great startling outrage is perpetrated; the slave power with its train of corruption and demoralization shows itself in its naked deformity, and threatens to swallow down the whole future of the country at one gulp.

Now the popular conscience wakes up. The people of the North rise to a great effort. The first attempt to rescue the development of the Republic from the grasp of that despotic power fails, but the movement grows in dimensions and intensity. We press on and on, and the day of deliverance is at hand. Oh, it comes at last! How we have longed to see it! How we have counted every minute by the impatient throbbings of our hearts! We rally in formidable array; every fibre of our being trembles with eagerness for the greatest of struggles; every pulsation of our blood beats the charge! We place one of the purest, noblest, and ablest men of the nation at the head of our army—victory is within our grasp;—and there stand some who call themselves patriots, mouthing like children that they cannot do as much as they would have done, if their particular favorite had been nominated for the Presidency!

Oh, sir, if we ever have a right to grow impatient with our fellows, it is when we see them at a moment of a great crisis, governed by small and paltry considerations. [Loud and prolonged applause.]

I do not plead the cause of party discipline. That is not one of the deities at whose shrine I worship. It never will be. But must I, born in a foreign land, speak to you of devotion to the great interests of your country?

Must I entreat you to sacrifice the small whim of a personal preference to the greatest cause of this age? No, no! it cannot be. No man in whose soul glows a spark of sympathy with struggling humanity, can now stand idle. No heart that ever was fired by the divine breath of liberty, can now remain cold. [Great applause.]

Let Wisconsin stretch her hand across the great lakes and grasp that of New York. Let it be known that New York and Wisconsin, who stood together to the last for Seward in the Convention, will be the first and foremost in the battle for Lincoln and Liberty! [Enthusiastic and long-continued cheering.]

## VI.

### THE DOOM OF SLAVERY.

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SPEECH DELIVERED AT VERANDAH HALL, ST. LOUIS,  
MISSOURI, ON THE 1ST OF AUGUST, 1860.

*The speaker had been invited to St. Louis by the Emancipationists of that city. The Presidential campaign of 1860, with Mr. Lincoln as the candidate of the Republicans, Mr. Douglas and Mr. Breckinridge as the two rival candidates of the Democrats, and Mr. Bell as the candidate of the Constitutional Union party, had fairly begun, and the popular excitement was running high. The anti-slavery movement had grown to imposing dimensions in the city of St. Louis, but was still weak in the interior of the State. His speech was, in the first place, intended to aid the Emancipationists in electing their Congressional candidates, but the speaker availed himself of this opportunity to address a direct argument to the people of the Slave States.*

MR. PRESIDENT AND GENTLEMEN:—

To deny the existence of an evil they do not mean to remedy, to ascribe to paltry causes the origin of great problems they do not mean to solve, to charge those who define the nature of an existing difficulty with having originated it—these are expedients which the opponents of reformatory movements have resorted to since mankind has a history. An appeal to ignorance or timidity is their last hope, when all resources of logic and argument are exhausted. The old comedy is repeated again and again.

The assertions that the great contest between free and slave labor has no foundation in fact, that the origin of the slavery controversy is to be found in the fanaticism of a few Northern abolitionists, and that those who speak



of an "irrepressible conflict" are to be made responsible for its existence—these form the argumentative staple of those who possess either not sagacity enough to discern or not courage enough to state facts as they are.

In investigating the causes of the great struggle which has for years kept the minds of the people in constant uneasiness and excitement, I shall endeavor to act with the most perfect fairness. I shall not indulge in any denunciations. I shall impeach the motives of no one. I shall not appeal to prejudice or passion. I invite you to pass in review the actual state of things with calmness and impartiality.

It is one of the best traits of human nature, that we form our first opinions on matters of general interest from our innate sense of right and wrong. Our moral impressions, the dictates of our consciences, the generous impulses of our hearts, are the sources from which our first convictions spring. But custom, material interest, and our natural inclination to acquiesce in that which *is*, whether right or wrong, that *vis inertiae* which has brought so much suffering upon humanity, are apt to overrule the native instincts of our moral nature. They are "sicklied over by the pale cast" of calculation; the freshness of their impelling powers is lost, and questions essentially moral are imperceptibly changed into questions of material interest, national economy, or political power.

The people of the South have evidently gone through that process with regard to the institution of slavery; they have become accustomed to identify its existence with the existence of Southern society, while even a large majority of the people of the North were rather inclined to silence their moral objections to it, and to acquiesce, until its immediate interference with matters of general interest gave a new impulse to their native antipathy. Although I am not ashamed to confess that the moral

merits of the question would alone have been more than sufficient to make me an anti-slavery man, yet I will confine myself to a discussion of its practical effects, in order to make myself intelligible even to those who do not sympathize with me.

This is the first time that I have had the honor to address a meeting in a Slave State, and even now I owe the privilege of expressing my opinions freely and without restraint to the circumstance that, although in a Slave State, I stand upon the soil of a free city, and under the generous protection of free men. [Applause.] Must I call “a *privilege*” what ought to be universally respected as the sacred birthright of every American citizen? Ask any slaveholder who may be present in this vast assembly, whether he does not deem it wrong and unjustifiable that I, an anti-slavery man, should be permitted to give a public expression of my views in a Slave State; whether he would not be in favor of silencing me by whatever means within his reach; whether he would not silence me at once in a strong slaveholding community? I do not mean to blame him for it. Let us give him a fair hearing. The slaveholder will state his political views substantially as follows:—

“On a point of astronomy, or chemistry, or medicine, “you may entertain and express whatever opinion you “please; but we cannot permit you to discuss the relation “between master and servant, as it exists here in the “Slave States; for, in doing so, you would endanger our “safety, and undermine our social system. Our condition “is such, that the slightest movement of insubordination, “once started, is apt to grow with uncontrollable rapidity; “we have, therefore, to guard against everything that “may start it; we cannot allow a free discussion of the “subject; we have to remove from our midst every incendiary element; we cannot be expected to tolerate

“opinions or persons among us that are opposed to the  
“ruling order of things. Whenever a mischievous attempt  
“is made, we are obliged to repress it with such energy  
“and severity as to strike terror into the hearts of those  
“who might be capable of repeating the attempt. Our con-  
“dition requires the promptest action, and when, in cases  
“of imminent danger, the regular process of the courts is  
“too slow or uncertain, we are obliged to resort to lynch-  
“law in order to supply its deficiencies.

“Moreover, we must adapt our rules and customs of  
“government to the peculiar wants of our social organi-  
“zation. In order to be safe, we must intrust the Govern-  
“ment, in its general administration, as well as its details,  
“to those who, by their own interests, are bound to be  
“the natural guardians of the system. Hence our safety  
“requires that the political power in our States should be  
“put into the hands of slaveholders; and where we have  
“no law to that effect, custom upholds the rule.

“In order to put the political ascendancy of those who  
“are most interested in the preservation of slavery upon  
“a solid basis, we must put down anything that would  
“produce and foster independent aspirations among the  
“other classes of society. It would not only be insane to  
“educate the slaves, but highly dangerous to extend to the  
“great mass of poor white non-slaveholders the means of  
“education; for in doing so we might raise an element  
“to influence and power, whose interests are not identical  
“with those of the slaveholder. This is our policy of self-  
“preservation, and we are bound to enforce it.”

Sir, I mean to be just to the slaveholders, and, strange  
as it may sound, as to the propriety of their policy I agree  
with them. Having identified their social existence with  
the existence of slavery, they cannot act otherwise.

It is necessity that urges them on. It is true that sla-  
very is an inflammable element. A stray spark of thought

or hope may cause a terrible conflagration. The torch of free speech and press, which gives light to the house of Liberty, is very apt to set on fire the house of Slavery. What is more natural than that the torch should be extinguished where there is such an abundance of explosive material?

It is true that in a slaveholding community the strictest subordination must be enforced, that the maintenance of established order requires the most rigorous preventive and repressive measures, which will not always allow of a strict observance of the rules of legal process; it is equally true that the making and the execution of the laws can be safely intrusted only to those who, by their position, are bound to the ruling interest; true, that popular education is dangerous to the exclusive rule of an exclusive class; true, that men must be kept stupid in order to be kept obedient. What is more consistent, therefore, than that fundamental liberties should be disregarded whenever they become dangerous; that the safeguards of human rights in the administration of justice should be set aside whenever the emergency calls for prompt and energetic action; that the masses should be left uneducated, in order to give the slaveholding oligarchy an undisputed sway? In one word, that the rights, the liberties, and the security of the individual should have to yield to the paramount consideration of the safety of the ruling interest? All this is true; and accepting the premises, all these necessities exist. You seem startled at this proposition, and ask, What is the institution that demands for its protection such measures? The Slave States are by no means original in this respect. Look at the Kingdom of Naples, where the ruling power is governed by similar exclusive interests, and acts on the same instinct of self-preservation. Does it not resort to the same means? You tell me that the principles under-

lying our system of government are very different from those of the Kingdom of Naples, and that the means of protection I spoke of run contrary to the spirit of our institutions. Indeed, so it seems to be. What does that prove? Simply this: that a social institution which is in antagonism with the principles of democratic government cannot be maintained and protected by means which are in accordance with those principles; and, on the other hand, that a social institution which cannot be protected by means which are in accordance with the democratic principles of our Government, must essentially be in antagonism to those principles. It proves that the people in the slaveholding States, although pretending to be freemen, are, by the necessities arising from their condition, the slaves of slavery. That is all.

But I am told that the Slave States are sovereign as to their domestic institutions, and may shape and govern their home concerns according to their own notions, subject only to the Constitution of the United States. Granted. But the necessities of slavery do not stop there. The Slave States are members of a Federal family, and, as the King of Naples in his foreign policy is governed by his peculiar interests, so is the policy of the Slave States in our Federal affairs governed by their peculiar necessities.

I hear much said of the aggressive spirit of the slave power, but I am almost inclined to acquit it of that charge, for all its apparently aggressive attempts are no less dictated by instinct of self-preservation, than the most striking features of its home policy.

Let us listen to the slaveholder again. He says: "What will become of the security of our slave property, if, inside of this Union, a slave may finally escape from the hands of his master by simply crossing the line of his State? But the fanatical anti-slavery spirit prevailing in



“the Free States will avail itself of every facility the common legal process affords, as the trial by jury and the writ of *habeas corpus*, to aid the fugitive in his escape. We are therefore obliged to demand such legislation at the hands of our General Government as will remove these obstacles thrown in the way of the recapture of our property, and oblige the citizens, by law, to assist us in the reappréhension of the fugitive.” So the trial by jury and the writ of *habeas corpus* will have to yield, and the good old common-law principle, that in all cases concerning life and liberty the presumption be in favor of liberty, goes by the board. This may seem rather hard, but is it not eminently consistent?

The necessities of slavery do not stop there. Let us hear how the slaveholder proceeds: “In order to obtain such legislation from our national councils, it is necessary that the prejudices against slavery existing in the Free States be disarmed. It is impossible that the slave interest should deem itself secure as long as a violent agitation is kept up against it, which continually troubles us at home, and exercises upon the National Legislature an influence hostile to slavery. We are therefore obliged to demand that measures be taken to stop that agitation.” Nothing more natural than that. The right of petition, held sacred even by some despotic governments, must be curtailed. Post-office regulations have to prevent the dissemination of anti-slavery sentiments by the newspapers. Even in the Free States willing instruments are found, who urge the adoption of measures tending to suppress the very discussion of this question. Laws are advocated in Congress (and that “champion of free labor,” Douglas, takes the lead), making it a criminal offence to organize associations hostile to slavery, and empowering the General Government to suppress them by means of a centralized police. [Loud cheers.] This

may seem somewhat tyrannical, but is it not eminently consistent? [Applause.]

But in order to succeed in this, slavery needs a controlling power in the General Government. It cannot expect to persuade us, so it must try to subdue and rule us. Hear the slaveholder: "It is impossible that we should consider our interests safe in this Union, unless the political equilibrium between the Free and Slave States be restored. If the Free States are permitted to increase, and the Slave States stand still, we shall be completely at the mercy of a hostile majority. We are therefore obliged to demand accessions of territory, out of which new Slave States can be formed, so as to increase our representation in Congress, and to restore the equilibrium of power." Nothing more sensible. The acquisition of foreign countries, such as Cuba and the northern states of Mexico, is demanded; and, if they cannot be obtained by fair purchase and diplomatic transaction, war must be resorted to; and, if the majority of the people are not inclined to go to war, our international relations must be disturbed by filibustering expeditions, precipitating, if possible, this country into wars, and thus forcing the peaceable or cheating the enthusiastic into subserviency to the plans of the slave power. You may call this piracy, disgracing us in the eyes of the civilized world. But can you deny that slavery needs power, and that it cannot obtain that power except by extension?

So pressed by its necessities, it lays its hand upon our national Territories. Time-honored compacts, hemming in slavery, must be abrogated. The Constitution must be so construed as to give slavery unlimited sway over our national domain. Hence your Nebraska Bills and Dred Scott decisions and slave-code platforms. You may call that atrocious, but can you deny its consistency?

"But," adds the slaveholder, "of what use is to us the

“abstract right to go with our slave property into the Territories, if you pass laws which attract to the Territories a class of population that will crowd out slavery; if you attract to them the foreign immigrant by granting him the immediate enjoyment of political rights; if you allure the paupers from all parts of the globe by your pre-emption laws and homestead bills? We want the negro in the Territories. You give us the foreign immigrant. Slavery cannot exist except with the system of large farms, and your homestead bills establish the system of small farms, with which free labor is inseparably connected. We are therefore obliged to demand that all such mischievous projects be abandoned.” Nothing more plausible. Hence the right of the laboring man to acquire property in the soil by his labor is denied, your homestead bills voted down, the blight of oppressive speculation fastened upon your virgin soil, and attempts are made to deprive the foreign immigrant in the Territories of the immediate enjoyment of political rights, which, in the primitive state of social organization, are essential to his existence. All this in order to give slavery a chance to obtain possession of our national domain. This may seem rather hard. But can you deny that slavery, for its own protection, needs power in the General Government? that it cannot obtain that power except by increased representation? that it cannot increase its representation except by conquest and extension over the Territories? and that with this policy all measures are incompatible which bid fair to play the Territories into the hands of free labor?

This is not all. Listen to the slaveholder once more: “Our States,” he tells us, “are essentially agricultural, producing States. We have but little commerce, and still less manufacturing industry. All legislation tending to benefit the commercial and manufacturing interests, prin-

“cipally, is therefore to our immediate prejudice. It will  
“oblige us to contribute to the growth and prosperity of  
“the Free States at our expense, and consequently turn the  
“balance of political power still more against us. We are,  
“therefore, obliged to demand that all attempts to promote,  
“by Federal legislation, the industrial interest, be given  
“up.” Nothing more logical. The system of slave labor  
has never permitted them to recognize and develop the  
harmony of agricultural and industrial and commercial  
pursuits. What is more natural than that they should  
seek to give the peculiar economical interest in which  
their superiority consists, the preponderance in our eco-  
nomical policy? Hence their unrelenting opposition to  
all legislation tending to develop the peculiar resources  
of the Free States.

Here let us pause. Is there anything strange or sur-  
prising in all this? You may call it madness, but there  
is method in this madness. The slave power is impelled  
by the irrepressible power of necessity. It cannot exist  
unless it rules, and it cannot rule unless it keeps down its  
opponents. All its demands and acts are in strict har-  
mony with its interests and attributes; they are the na-  
tural growth of its existence. I repeat, I am willing to  
acquit it of the charge of wilful aggression; I am willing  
to concede that it struggles for self-preservation. But  
now the momentous question arises: How do the means  
which seem to be indispensable for the self-preservation  
of slavery agree with the existence and interests of free  
labor society?

Sir, if Mr. Hammond of South Carolina, or Mr. Brown  
of Mississippi, had listened to me, would they not be  
obliged to give me credit for having stated their case  
fairly? Now, listen to me, while I state our own.

Cast your eyes over that great bee-hive, called the Free  
States. See by the railroad and the telegraphic wire every

village, almost every backwoods cottage, drawn within the immediate reach of progressive civilization. Look over our grain-fields, but lately a lonesome wilderness, where machinery is almost superseding the labor of the human hand; over our workshops, whose aspect is almost daily changed by the magic touch of inventive genius; over our fleets of merchant vessels, numerous enough to make the whole world tributary to our prosperity; look upon our society, where by popular education and the continual change of condition the dividing lines between ranks and classes are almost obliterated; look upon our system of public instruction, which places even the lowliest child of the people upon the high road of progressive advancement; upon our rapid growth and expansive prosperity, which is indeed subject to reverses and checks, but contains such a wonderful fertility of resources, that every check is a mere incentive for new enterprise, every reverse but a mere opportunity for the development of new powers.

To what do we owe all this? First and foremost, to that perfect freedom of inquiry, which acknowledges no rules but those of logic, no limits but those that bound the faculties of the human mind. [Cheers.] Its magic consists in its universality. To it we owe the harmony of our progressive movement in all its endless ramifications. No single science, no single practical pursuit, exists in our day independently of all other sciences, all other practical pursuits. This is the age of the solidarity of progress. Set a limit to the freedom of inquiry in one direction, and you destroy the harmony of its propelling action. Give us the Roman Inquisition, which forbids Galileo Galilei to think that the earth moves around the sun, and he has to interrupt and give up the splendid train of his discoveries, and their influence upon all other branches of science is lost; he has to give it up, or he



must fight the Inquisition. [Cheers.] Let the slave power or any other political or economical interest tell us that we must think and say and invent and discover nothing which is against its demands, and we must interrupt and give up the harmony of our progressive development, or fight the tyrannical pretension, whatever shape it may assume. [Loud cheers.]

Believing as we do that the moral and ideal development of man is the true aim and end of human society, we must preserve in their efficiency the means which serve that end. In order to secure to the freedom of inquiry its full productive power, we must surround it with all the safeguards which political institutions afford. As we cannot set a limit to the activity of our minds, so we cannot muzzle our mouths or fetter the press with a censorship. [Applause.] *We cannot arrest or restrain the discussion of the question: What system of labor or what organization of society promotes best the moral and intellectual development of man?* [Loud applause.] We cannot deprive a single individual of the privileges which protect him in the free exercise of his faculties, and the enjoyment of his rights, so long as these faculties are not employed to the detriment of the rights and liberties of others. Our organization of society resting upon equal rights, we find our security in a general system of popular education, which fits all for an intelligent exercise of those rights. This is the home policy of free labor society. Its policy in our Federal affairs must necessarily correspond. Deeming free and intelligent labor the only safe basis of society, it is our duty to expand its blessings over all the territory within our reach; seeing our own prosperity advanced by the prosperity of our neighbors, we must endeavor to plant upon our borders a system of labor which answers in that respect. So we recognize the right of the laboring man to the soil he cultivates, and shield him against

oppressive speculation. Seeing in the harmonious development of all branches of labor a source of progress and power, we must adopt a policy which draws to light the resources of the land, gives work to our workshops, and security to our commerce. These are the principles and views governing our policy.

Slaveholders, look at this picture, and at this. Can the difference escape your observation? You may say, as many have said, that there is, indeed, a difference of principles, but not necessarily an antagonism of interests. Look again.

Your social system is founded upon forced labor, ours upon free labor. Slave labor cannot exist together with freedom of inquiry, and so you demand the restriction of that freedom; free labor cannot exist without it, and so we maintain its inviolability. Slave labor demands the setting aside of the safeguards of individual liberty, for the purpose of upholding subordination, and protecting slave property; free labor demands their preservation, as essential and indispensable to its existence and progressive development. Slavery demands extension by an aggressive foreign policy; free labor demands an honorable peace and friendly intercourse with the world abroad for its commerce, and a peaceable and undisturbed development of our resources at home for its agriculture and industry. Slavery demands extension over our national Territories for the purpose of gaining political power. Free labor demands the national domain for working men, for the purpose of spreading the blessings of liberty and civilization. Slavery, therefore, opposes all measures tending to secure the soil to the actual laborer; free labor, therefore, recognizes the right of the settler to the soil, and demands measures protecting him against the pressure of speculation. Slavery demands the absolute ascendancy of the planting interest in our economical policy;

free labor demands legislation tending to develop all the resources of the land, and to harmonize the agricultural, commercial, and industrial interests. Slavery demands the control of the General Government for its special protection and the promotion of its peculiar interests; free labor demands that the General Government be administered for the purpose of securing to all the blessings of liberty, and for the promotion of the general welfare. [Tremendous applause.] Slavery demands the recognition of its divine right; free labor recognizes no divine right but that of the liberty of all men. [Loud cheers.]

In one word, *slavery demands for its protection and perpetuation a system of policy which is utterly incompatible with the principles upon which the organization of free labor society rests.* There is the antagonism. That is the essence of the "irrepressible conflict." It is a conflict of principles underlying interests, always the same, whether appearing as a moral, economical, or political question. Mr. Douglas boasted that he could repress it with police measures; he might as well try to fetter the winds with a rope. The South means to repress it with decisions of the Supreme Court; they might as well, like Xerxes, try to subdue the waves of the ocean, by throwing chains into the water. [Applause.]

The conflict of constitutional constructions is, indeed, but a mere incident of the great struggle, *a mere symptom of the crisis.* Long before the slavery question, in the form of an abstract constitutional controversy, agitated the public mind, the conflict of interests raged in our national councils. What mattered it that the struggle about the encouragement of home industry and internal improvements was not ostensibly carried on under the firm of pro and anti-slavery? What mattered it that your new-fangled constitutional doctrines were not yet invented, when slavery tried to expand by the annexation of foreign

countries? that no Dred Scott decision was yet cooked up, when the right of petition was curtailed, when attempts were made to arrest the discussion of the slavery question all over the Union, and when the trial by jury, and the writ of *habeas corpus*, were overridden by the Fugitive Slave Law? And even lately, when the slave power, with one gigantic grasp, attempted to seize the whole of our national domain, what else was and is your new constitutional doctrine but an ill-disguised attempt to clothe a long-cherished design with the color of law?

Read your history with an impartial eye, and you will find that the construction of the Constitution always shaped itself according to the prevailing moral impulses, or the predominance of material over political interests. The logic of our minds is but too apt to follow in the track of our sympathies and aspirations. It was when the South had control of our Government that acts were passed for the raising of duties on imports, for the creation of a national bank, and in aid of the American shipping interest. It was under the lead of the South that the systems of internal improvements, and of the protection of home industry, were inaugurated; it was the South, no less than the North, that insisted upon and exercised the power of Congress to exclude slavery from the Territories. So long as these measures seemed to agree with the predominant interest, there seemed to be no question about their constitutionality. Even Mr. Calhoun himself said, in one of his most celebrated speeches, delivered in the session of 1815-'16: "That it was the duty of the Government, as a means of defence, to encourage the domestic industry of the country." But as soon as it was found out that this policy redounded more to the benefit of free labor than that of the unenterprising South, then the same men who had inaugurated it worked its overthrow, on the plea that it was at war with the

principles of the Constitution. [Murmurs of applause.] The constitutionality of the ordinance of 1787 was never questioned, as long as the prevailing sentiment in the South ran against the perpetuation of slavery. The Missouri Compromise was held as sacred and inviolable as the Constitution itself, so long as it served to introduce Slave States into this Union; but no sooner were, by virtue of its provisions, free Territories to be organized, than its unconstitutionality was at once discovered.

The predominance of interests determines the construction of the Constitution. So it was, and so it ever will be. Only those who remained true to the original programme of the fathers, remained true to the original construction. Decide the contest of principles underlying interests, and the conflict of constitutional constructions will *settle itself*. This may seem a dangerous political theory. It is not an article of my creed — not a matter of principle — but a matter of experience; not a doctrine, but a fact.

Thus the all-pervading antagonism stands before us, gigantic in its dimensions, growing every day in the awful proportions of its problems, involving the character of our institutions; involving our relations with the world abroad; involving our peace, our rights and liberties at home; involving our growth and prosperity; involving our moral and political existence as a nation.

How short-sighted, how childish, are those who find its origin in artificial agitation! As though we could produce a tempest by blowing our noses, or an earthquake by stamping our puny feet upon the ground. [Laughter.] But how to solve, how to decide it? Let us pass in review our political parties, and the remedies they propose.

There we encounter the so-called Union party, with Bell and Everett, who tell us the best way to settle the



conflict is to ignore it. [Laughter.] Ignore it! Ignore it, when attempts are made to plunge the country into war and disgrace, for the purpose of slavery extension! Ignore it, when slavery and free labor wage their fierce war about the possession of the national domain! Ignore it, when the liberties of speech and press are attacked! Ignore it, when the actual settler claims the virgin soil, and the slaveholding capitalists claim it also! Ignore it, when the planting interest seeks to establish and maintain its exclusive supremacy in our economical policy! Ignore it, indeed! Ignore the fire that consumes the corner-posts of your house! Ignore the storm that breaks the rudder and tears to tatters the sails of your ship! Conjure the revolted elements with a meek Mount Vernon lecture! Pour upon the furious waves the placid oil of a quotation from Washington's farewell address! [Cheers and laughter.]

It is true, they tell us they will enforce the laws and the Constitution. Well enough! But what laws? Those that free labor demands, or those that slavery gives us? What Constitution? That of Washington and Madison, or that of Slidell, Douglas, and Taney! [Loud and long-continued cheering.]

The conflict stands there with the stubborn, brutal force of reality. However severely it may disturb the nerves of timid gentlemen, there it stands, and speaks the hard, stern language of fact. I understand well that great problems and responsibilities should be approached with care and caution. But times like these demand the firm action of men who know what they will, *and will it*, not that eunuch policy, which, conscious of its own unproductiveness, invites us blandly to settle down into the imbecile contentment of general impotency. They *cannot* ignore the conflict if they would, but have not nerve enough to decide it if they could. [Applause.]

The next party that claims our attention is the so-called Democracy. As it is my object to discuss the practical, not the constitutional, merits of the problem before us, I might pass over the divisions existing in that organization. In fact, the point that separates Mr. Douglas from Mr. Breckinridge is but a mere quibble, a mere matter of etiquette. Mr. Douglas is unwilling to admit in words what he has a hundred times admitted in fact — for, can you tell me what practical difference in the world there is between direct and indirect intervention by Congress in favor of slavery, and that kind of non-intervention by Congress which merely consists in making room for direct intervention by the Supreme Court? And besides, in nearly all practical measures of policy, Mr. Douglas is regularly to be found on the side of the extreme South. Like that great statesman of yours (I beg your pardon, gentlemen, for alluding to him in decent political company), he always votes against measures for the encouragement of home industry, perhaps because he does not understand them. [Laughter.] He is one of the firmest supporters of the ascendancy of the planters' interests in our economical questions, and, as to the extension of slavery by conquest and annexation, the wildest filibusters may always count upon his tenderest sympathies.

So I say I might have ignored him, if he had not succeeded in creating the most deafening of noises with the hollowest of drums. [Loud cheers.]

He proposes to "repress the irrepressible conflict" with what he emphatically styles "his great principle." At first, he defined it as "self-government of the people in the Territories;" but it soon became apparent that under his great principle the people of the Territories were governed by anybody but *self*, and he called it "popular sovereignty." It soon turned out that this

kind of sovereignty was not very popular after all, and he called it "non-intervention." [Laughter.] Methinks something will intervene pretty soon, and he will strain his imagination for another name, if it be worth while at all to christen a thing which never had any tangible existence.

But if we may believe him, his "great principle," and nothing but his "great principle," will settle the irrepressible conflict, restore peace and harmony to the nation, and save the Union.

Let us judge the merits of his great principle by its results: Has it secured to the inhabitants of the Territories the right of self-government? Never were the people of a Territory subject to a despotism more arbitrary, and to violence more lawless and atrocious, than were the people of Kansas after the enactment of the Nebraska Bill. Has it removed the slavery question from the halls of Congress? The fight has never raged with greater fierceness, and Congress came hardly ever so near debating with bowie-knives and revolvers, as about the questions raised by the Nebraska Bill. Has it established safe and uniform rules for the construction of the Constitution? It has set aside the construction put upon the Constitution by those who framed it; and for the rest, let Mr. Douglas give you his opinion on the Dred Scott decision. Has it given peace and harmony to the country, by repressing the irrepressible conflict? Alas! poor great principle! this harangue of peace and harmony inflamed the irrepressible conflict even inside of the Democratic party, and rent into two sections an organization which claimed the exclusive privilege of nationality.

These were its immediate results. It is true, Mr. Douglas accuses his adversaries of having created the disturbance. Certainly, if the whole American nation

had bowed their heads in silent obedience before Mr. Douglas's mandate, there would have been no strife. Mr. Slidell, Mr. Buchanan, and Mr. Breckenridge, may say the same; so may the Emperor of Austria and the King of Naples. Such men are apt to be disturbed by opponents, and Mr. Douglas need not be surprised if he has a few!

The true source of the difficulty was this: The Kansas-Nebraska Bill was thrown as an ambiguous, illogical measure, between two antagonistic interests, each of which construed it for its own advantage. It brought the contesting forces together, face to face, without offering a clear ground upon which to settle the conflict. Thus it quickened and intensified the struggle, instead of allaying it. Hence, its total failure as a harmonizing measure.

What, then, is its positive result? As to its practical importance in the conflict between free and slave labor, Mr. Douglas himself enlightens us, as follows:

"Has the South been excluded from all the Territory acquired from Mexico? What says the bill from the House of Representatives, now on your table, repealing the slave-code in New Mexico established by the people themselves? It is part of the history of the country, that, under this doctrine of non-intervention, this doctrine that you delight to call squatter sovereignty, the people of New Mexico have introduced and protected slavery in the whole of that Territory. Under this doctrine, they have converted a tract of Free Territory into Slave Territory, more than five times the size of the State of New York. Under this doctrine, slavery has been extended from the Rio Grande to the Gulf of California, and from the line of the Republic of Mexico, not only up to 36° 30', but up to 38°—giving you a degree and a half more Slave Territory than you ever

“claimed. In 1848 and 1849 and 1850, you only asked to have the line of  $36^{\circ} 30'$ . The Nashville Convention fixed that as its ultimatum. I offered it in the Senate in August, 1848, and it was adopted here, but rejected in the House of Representatives. You asked only up to  $36^{\circ} 30'$ , and non-intervention has given you Slave Territory up to  $38^{\circ}$ , a degree and a half more than you asked; and yet you say that this is a sacrifice of Southern rights.

“These are the fruits of this principle, which the Senator from Mississippi regards as hostile to the rights of the South. Where did you ever get any other fruits that were more palatable to your taste, or more refreshing to your strength? What other inch of Free Territory has been converted into Slave Territory on the American continent, since the Revolution, except in New Mexico and Arizona under the principle of non-intervention affirmed at Charleston? If it is true that this principle of non-intervention has conferred upon you all that immense territory, has protected slavery in that comparatively Northern and cold region where you did not expect it to go, cannot you trust the same principle further South, when you come to acquire additional territory from Mexico? If it be true that this principle of non-intervention has given to slavery all New Mexico, which was surrounded on nearly every side by free territory, will not the same principle protect you in the Northern States of Mexico when they are acquired, since they are now surrounded by slave territory?”

Indeed! This, then, is the practical solution of the difficulty which Mr. Douglas proposes: The “great principle of non-intervention,” which, according to his own testimony, strengthens slavery, by increasing the number of Slave States and their representation and power in



our General Government; to which is to be added the annexation of Cuba and the northern states of Mexico, out of which an additional number of Slave States is to be carved. But his Northern friends say that he is the champion of free labor—and they are honorable men. [Laughter.]

Oh, what a deep-seated, overweening confidence Mr. Douglas, when he made this statement, must have had in the unfathomable, desperate, incorrigible stupidity of those Northern Democrats who support him for the purpose of baffling and punishing the fire-eaters of the South. Good, innocent souls, do they not see that by supporting Mr. Douglas's policy, which throws into the lap of slavery Territory after Territory, they will strengthen and render more overbearing the very same slave power they mean to baffle and punish? Do they not see that they are preparing a lash for their own backs? It is true, when they feel it—and *they* deserve to feel it—they may console themselves with the idea that it is a whip of their own manufacture! [Great applause.]

At last we arrive at the programme of the slave power in its open and undisguised form, of which Mr. Breckenridge is the representative, and Mr. Douglas the servant, although he does not wear its livery except on occasions of state.

The programme is as follows: The agitation of the slavery question, North and South, is to be arrested; the Fugitive Slave Law, in its present form, is to be strictly carried out, and all State legislation impeding its execution to be repealed; the Constitutional right of slavery to occupy the Territories of the United States, and to be protected there, is to be acknowledged; all measures tending to impede the ingress of slavery, and its establishment in the Territories, are to be abandoned; the opposition to the conquest and annexation of foreign

countries, out of which more Slave States can be formed, is to be given up; the economical policy of the planting interest, to the exclusion of the encouragement of home industry, is to become the ruling policy of the country.

This is the Southern solution of the irrepressible conflict.

This programme possesses at least the merit of logic — the logic of slavery and despotism against the logic of free labor and liberty. The issue is plainly made up. Free labor is summoned to submit to the measures which slavery deems necessary for its own perpetuation. We are called upon to adapt our laws and system of policy, and the whole development of our social organization, to the necessities and interests of slavery. *We are summoned to surrender.*

Let us for a moment judge the people of the Free States by the meanest criterion we can think of; let us apply a supposition to them, which, if applied to ourselves, we would consider an insult. If the people of the Free States were so devoid of moral sense as not to distinguish between right and wrong; so devoid of generous impulses as not to sympathize with the downtrodden and degraded; so devoid of manly pride as to be naturally inclined to submit to everybody who is impudent enough to assume the command; tell me, even in this worst, this most disgusting of all contingencies, could free labor quietly submit to the demands of the slave power so long as it has a just appreciation of its own interests? If we cared, neither for other people's rights nor for our own dignity, can we submit as long as we care for own pockets?

Surrender the privilege of discussing our social problems without restraint! Be narrowed down to a given circle of ideas, which we shall not transgress! Do we not owe our growth and prosperity and power, to that free-

dom of inquiry which is the source of all progress and improvement? Surrender the national Territories to slavery! Do we not owe our growth and prosperity to the successful labor of our neighbors just as well as to our own? Shall we consent to be surrounded and hemmed in with thriftless communities, whose institutions retard their growth, and thereby retard our own? Abandon all laws like the homestead bill, tending to establish free labor on our national domain! Shall we thus give up the rights of labor, and destroy the inheritance of our children? Give up our opposition to the extension of slavery by the conquest of foreign countries! Shall we squander the blood of our sons and the marrow of the land in destructive wars, for the profit of the enemies of free labor, while it is a peaceful development to which we owe our power in the world? Adopt the exclusive economical policy of the planting interest! Shall our mineral wealth sleep undeveloped in the soil? Shall our water-powers run idle, and the bustle of our factories cease? Shall the immense laboring force in our increasing population be deprived of the advantage of a harmonious development of all the branches of human labor? Shall we give up our industrial and commercial independence of the world abroad?

And what price do they offer to pay us for all our sacrifices, if we submit? Why, slavery can then be preserved! How can we hesitate? Impossible! It cannot be thought of! Even the most debased and submissive of our doughfaces cannot submit to it, as soon as the matter comes to a practical test; and, therefore, the success of the Southern programme will never bring about a final decision of the conflict. Suppose we were beaten in the present electoral contest, would that decide the conflict of interests forever? No! Thanks to the nobler impulses of human nature, our consciences would not let

us sleep; thanks to the good sense of the people, their progressive interests would not suffer them to give up the struggle. The power of resistance, the elasticity of free society, cannot be exhausted by one, cannot be annihilated by a hundred defeats. Why? Because it receives new impulses, new inspirations, from every day's work; it marches on in harmony with the spirit of the age. [Cheers.]

There is but one way of settling the "irrepressible conflict." It is not by resisting the spirit of the times, and by trying to neutralize its impelling power; for you attempt that in vain; *but it is by neutralizing the obstacles which have thrown themselves into its path.* There is no other. The irrepressible conflict will rage with unabated fury, until our social and political development is harmonized with the irrepressible tendency of the age. [Great cheers.]

That is the solution which the Republicans propose. Their programme is simple and consistent:

Protection of our natural and constitutional rights.

Non-interference with the social and political institutions existing by the legislation of States. But exclusion of slavery from the national Territories; they must be free, because they are national. [Immense cheering.]

Promotion and expansion of free labor by the Homestead Bill, and the encouragement of home industry. [Cheering renewed.]

Will this effect a settlement of the conflict? Let the Fathers of this Republic answer the question, and I will give you the Southern construction of their policy. In a debate which occurred in the Senate of the United States, on the 23d of January, Mr. Mason of Virginia said:

"Now, as far as concerns our ancestry, I am satisfied of this — they were not abolitionists. On the contrary, 'I believe this was their opinion: their prejudice was

“aimed against the foreign slave trade, the African slave trade; and their belief was that, cutting that off, *slavery would die out of itself, without any act of abolition*. I attempted, at one time, to show, by the recorded opinions of Mr. Madison, that the famous ordinance of 1787, so far as it prohibited slavery in the Territory Northwest of the Ohio, was aimed at the African slave trade, and at that alone; the idea being, *that if they would restrict the area into which slaves would be introduced from abroad, they would, to that extent, prevent the importation of slaves; and that, when it was altogether prevented, the condition of slavery would die out of itself; but they were not abolitionists, far less within the meaning and spirit of the abolitionists of the present day.*”

Well, I am willing to accept this, as it stands, and Mr. Mason may certainly be considered good Southern authority. I will not stop to investigate the depth and extent of the anti-slavery sentiments of such men as Franklin, who was the father of an abolition society, and of Washington, who expressed his desire “to see slavery abolished by law;” I am satisfied with Mr. Mason’s admission.

This, then, is what the Fathers intended to effect: *to bring about a state of things by which slavery would die out of itself*. What else do we want? “You mean, then,” I am asked, “to adopt a policy which will work the peaceable and gradual extinction of slavery?” And I answer, “Yes; for, if we do not, we shall have to submit to a policy which will work the gradual extinction of liberty.” There is the dilemma. Our answer is understood. If Washington, Madison, and Jefferson, were abolitionists, we are. Mr. Mason says they were not; well, then we are not, for our policy has been theirs, and theirs has become ours. [Loud cheers.]

Will this policy effect a solution of the conflict? It



will; because it will harmonize our social and political development with the tendency of our age, by neutralizing the obstacles that stand in its way.

But I am told that these obstacles refuse to be neutralized. They will resist. Resist by what? By dissolving the Union. The dissolution of the Union! This spectre has so long haunted the imaginations of timid people, that it is time at last to anatomize the frightful apparition.

They threaten to dissolve the Union. Why? First, because we do not stop the agitation of the slavery question. It is true, we do discuss every social problem that presents itself to our consideration; we agitate it, and we do not mean to stop. And, therefore, slaveholders, you will dissolve the Union? Do you think we shall make haste to stop the agitation, to muzzle our mouths, and our press, after you have dissolved it? United as we are with you at present, we certainly are not devoid of fraternal sympathy; but let the acrimonious feeling arising from a divorce embitter our relations, will not the agitation, which annoys you *now*, be a hundred times more dangerous to you *then*? [Cheers.]

Secondly: You threaten to dissolve the Union, because we do not show sufficient alacrity in the catching of fugitive slaves. True, we are not much inclined to perform for the slaveholder a menial, dirty service, which he would hardly stoop to do for himself. [Enthusiastic cheering.] And, therefore, you will dissolve the Union! Do you not see that, while now, indeed, a great many slaves escape, the North would after a dissolution scorn to surrender a single one? Would not what is now the Canada line be removed right to the banks of the Ohio?

Thirdly: You threaten the dissolution of the Union, because we do not mean to surrender the Territories to slavery. True, we mean to use every constitutional

means within our reach to save them for free labor. And, therefore, you will dissolve the Union! Do you think that after a dissolution we shall courteously invite slavery to make itself comfortable on our national domain? As things are now, "champions of free labor," such as Douglas, may occasionally offer you a chance to acquire for slavery a Territory "five times as large as the State of New York;" but will that be possible after the Union is dissolved? Mark well what position the North will take, if, by a revolutionary act against our National Government, you should attempt to cut loose from the Union. The Territories are the property of the Union as such; those who, in a revolutionary way, desert the Union, give up their right to the property of the Union. That property, the Territories, will remain where the Union remains, and the slave-power would do well first to consider how much blood it can spare, before it attempts to strip the Union of a single square foot of ground. [Tremendous cheers.] Thus, while, according to Judge Douglas, you now have a chance to acquire slave territory by the operation of his "great principle," that chance will be entirely gone as soon as by a secession you give up the least shadow of a right to the property of the Union.

Lastly: You threaten to dissolve the Union, because the North refuses to submit to the exclusive economical policy of the planting interest. You want to establish the commercial and industrial independence of the slaveholding States. For years you have held Southern Conventions, and passed resolutions to that effect. You resolved not to purchase any longer the products of Northern industrial labor, but to build your own factories; not to carry on your exporting and importing trade any longer by Northern ships, but to establish steamship lines and commercial connections of your own. Well enough. Why

did you not do it, after having resolved it? Was it want of money? You have an abundance of it. Was it want of determination? Your resolutions displayed the fiercest zeal. What was it, then? And, indeed, the failure is magnificently complete. Senator Mason's homespun coat, sewed with Yankee thread and needle, adorned with Yankee buttons, hangs in the closet, a lone star, in solitary splendor. [Loud laughter.] After trying to establish a large shoe factory for the South, you came after a while to the irresistible conclusion that you must wear Massachusetts shoes and boots, or go barefooted. And even your Norfolk steamships are not launched yet from the dry-docks of Southern imagination. [Laughter.] How is this? I will tell you. The very same institution for the protection and perpetuation of which you want to establish your commercial and industrial independence, is incompatible with commercial and industrial labor and enterprise.

For this there are several excellent reasons. First, that class of your society which rules, and wants to perpetuate its rule, does not consist of working men. The inspiration of regular activity is foreign to their minds. Living upon the forced labor of others, they find their pride in being gentlemen of leisure. But it requires men of a superior organization to make leisure productive; men of the ordinary stamp, who have too much leisure for doing something, will in most cases do nothing. But it requires active labor to make us understand and appreciate labor; and we must understand and appreciate labor, in order to be able to direct labor. Hence, the slaveholders cannot take the lead in such a commercial and industrial movement, without changing the nature of their condition. But you may object, that they can at least encourage commerce and industry, and leave the execution of their plans and wishes to others. Indeed! But you must not

forget, that in modern times the most active and enterprising class of society, as soon as it becomes numerous, will inevitably become the ruling class. How can, therefore, the slaveholders do as you say, without undermining the foundation of their own ascendancy? But it is just that ascendancy which they mean, not to weaken, but to fortify. Do not bring forward this city of St. Louis as proof to the contrary. Your commerce and your industry are, indeed, largely developed, although Missouri is a Slave State; but do you not see that in the same measure as they rise, the ascendancy of the slave power disappears? [Great cheering.] Thus this has become a free city on slave soil. [Repeated cheering.]

But this is not all. Not only are the slaveholders, as a class, unfit to direct the commercial and industrial movement, but their system of labor is unfit to carry it out. Commerce and industry, in order to become independent, need *intelligent* labor. In the North, every laborer thinks and is required to think. In the South, the laborer is forbidden, to think lest he think too much; for thought engenders aspirations. [Laughter and applause.] With us, progress and enterprise derive their main support, their strongest impulses, from the intellectual development of the working classes. We do not dread the aspirations arising from it; it is the source of our prosperity, and at the same time of our safety. Our laboring man must be a freeman, in order to be what he ought to be — an intelligent laborer. Therefore, we educate him for liberty, by our system of public instruction. In the South, the intellectual development of the laboring classes, necessary for intelligent labor, would create aspirations dangerous to your domestic institutions. Your laboring man must be a brute, in order to remain what you want him to be — a slave. Therefore, you withhold from him all means of intellectual development. Among our farms

and workshops there stands an institution from which *our* system of labor derives its inspirations; that is *our school-house*, where our free laborers are educated. On your plantation-fields there stands another institution from which your system of labor derives its inspirations; and that is *your school-house*, where your slaves are flogged. And you speak of establishing the commercial and industrial independence of the slaveholding States! Do you not see that, in order to do this, you must adapt your system of labor to that purpose, by making the laborer intelligent, respectable, and at the same time aspiring? But if, by making the laborer intelligent, respectable, and aspiring, you attempt to force industrial enterprise, in a large measure, upon the Slave States, do you not see that your system of slave labor must yield? To foster commerce and industry in the Slave States for the purpose of protecting slavery! Would it not be like letting the sunlight into a room which you want to keep dark? Hence, the Slave States can never become commercially and industrially independent as long as they remain Slave States. They will always be obliged to buy from others, and others will do their carrying trade. At present, they do their business with friends, who are united to them by bonds of Union. They speak of dissolving that Union; then, as now, they will be obliged to transact the same business with us, their nearest neighbors; for if they could do otherwise they would have done so long ago. Would they prefer, by the dissolution the Union, to make enemies of those on whom they will always be commercially and industrially dependent?

Thus, you see, would the dissolution of the Union, in all points of dispute, defeat the very objects for which the South might feel inclined to attempt it. It would effect just the contrary of what it was intended for, and, indeed, if there is a party that can logically and consist-



ently advocate the dissolution of the Union, it is the party of extreme abolitionists who desire to extinguish slavery and to punish the South by a sudden and violent crisis. But as to the Slave States, as long as they have sense enough to understand their interests and to appreciate their situation, they may thank their good fortune if they are suffered to stay in the Union, with confederates who are, indeed, not willing to sacrifice their own principles and interests to slavery, but, by the radiating influence of their own growth and energy, will at least draw the Southern States also upon the road of progressive development.

But we are told that the people of the Slave States are a warlike race, and that they will gain by force what we are unwilling peaceably to concede. War? What a charm there is in that word for a people of colonels and generals! Well, since that old German monk invented that insignificant black powder, which blew the strongholds of feudalism into the air, war falls more and more under the head of mathematical sciences. Don Quixote, who, undoubtedly, would have been a hero in the ninth century, would certainly be the most egregious fool in the nineteenth. I have nothing to say about the bravery of the Southern people; for aught I care, they may be braver than they pretend to be; but I invite them candidly to open their eyes, like sensible men.

I will not compare the resources of the South, in men and money, with those of the North, although statistical statements would demonstrate the overwhelming superiority of the latter. We can afford to be liberal, and, for argument sake, admit that the South will equal the North in numbers, and, if they insist upon it, excel us in martial spirit. But it requires very little knowledge of military matters to understand that, aside of numbers, equipment, courage, and discipline, the strength of an army consists

in its ability to concentrate its forces, at all times, upon the decisive point. Providence is on the side of the big battalions, said Napoleon. That means, not that victory will always be with the most numerous army, but with that which is always able to appear in strength where the decisive blow is to be struck. An army that is always scattered over a large surface is, properly speaking, no army at all. Even by a much less numerous but concentrated enemy, it will be beaten in detail, division after division; it is defeated before having lost a man. This is plain.

*Keep in mind that the South thinks of going to war for the benefit and protection of slavery.* But slavery is not merely an abstract principle; slavery consists materially in the individual slaves—in so-and-so many millions of human chattels scattered over so-and-so many thousands of miles. In order to protect slavery, it is essential that the individual slaveholders be protected in the possession of their individual slaves.

I say, therefore, that slavery cannot be protected in general, without being protected in detail. But how can you protect it in detail? By guarding fifteen hundred miles of Northern frontier and two thousand miles of sea-coast against an enemy who is perfectly free in his movements, and, aided by an extensive railroad system, always able to concentrate his forces wherever he pleases? It is impossible; the dullest understanding sees it. It may be said that it will not be necessary. Indeed, for the Free States it would not. They may, in order to concentrate their forces, expose their territory, for the damage done by an invasion is easily repaired. The retreating invader cannot carry the liberties of the invaded country away with him. [Cheers.] Not so with slavery. A Northern anti-slavery army, or even a small flying corps, invading a slaveholding State, would, perhaps, not at

once systematically liberate the slaves, but, at all events, it would hardly squander much time and health in catching the runaways. The probability, therefore, is, that wherever a Northern army appears, the slaves will disappear, and so much of slavery with them — at least, for the time being. Invade a Free State, and the restoration of liberty, after the attack is repulsed, requires only the presence of freemen. But the restoration of slavery will require capital; that capital consisted principally in the slaves; the slaves have run away, and with them the capital necessary for the restoration of slavery.

The Slave States, therefore, cannot expose their territory without leaving unprotected the institution for the protection of which the war was undertaken. They have to cover thousands and thousands of vulnerable points, for every plantation is an open wound, every negro cabin a sore. Every border or seaboard Slave State will need its own soldiers, and more too, for the protection of its own slaves; and where then would be the material for the concentrated army.

Besides, the Slave States harbor a dangerous enemy within their own boundaries, and that is slavery itself. Imagine them at war with anti-slavery people, whom they have exasperated by their own hostility. What will be the effect upon the slaves? The question is not whether the North will instigate a slave rebellion, for I suppose they will not; the question is, whether they can prevent it, and I think they can not. But the anticipation of a negro insurrection (and the heated imagination of the slaveholder will discover symptoms of a rebellious spirit in every trifle) may again paralyze the whole South. Do you remember the effect of John Brown's attempt? The severest blow he struck at the slave power was not that he disturbed a town and killed several citizens, but that he revealed the weakness of the whole South. Let Gov-

ernor Wise of Virginia, carry out his threatened invasion of the Free States, not with twenty-three, but with twenty-three hundred, followers at his heels — what will be the result? As long as they behave themselves, we shall let them alone; but as soon as they create any disturbance, they will be put into the station-house; and the next day we shall read in the newspapers of some Northern city, among the reports of the police court: "Henry A. Wise and others, for disorderly conduct, fined \$5." [Loud laughter and applause.] Or, if he has made an attempt on any man's life, or against our institutions, he will most certainly find a Northern jury proud enough to acquit him on the ground of incorrigible mental derangement. [Continued laughter and applause.] Our pictorial prints will have material for caricatures for two issues, and a burst of laughter will ring to the skies from Maine to California. And there is the end of it. But behold John Brown with twenty-three men raising a row at Harper's Ferry; the whole South frantic with terror; the whole State of Virginia in arms; troops marching and counter-marching, as if the battle of Austerlitz were to be fought over again; innocent cows shot as bloodthirsty invaders, and even the evening song of the peaceful whippoorwills mistaken for the battle-cry of rebellion. [Incessant laughter.] And those are the men who will expose themselves to the chances of a pro-slavery war with an anti-slavery people! Will they not look upon every captain as a John Brown, and every sergeant and private as a Coppie or Stevens? They will hardly have men enough to quiet their fears at home. What will they have to oppose to the enemy? If they want to protect slavery then, every township will want its home regiment, and every plantation its garrison. No sooner will a movement of concentration be attempted, than the merest panic may undo and frustrate it. Themistocles might

say that Greece was on his ships; a French general might say that the Republic was in his camp; but slavery will be neither on the ships nor in the camps; it will be spread defenceless over thousands of square miles. This will be their situation: either they concentrate their forces, and slavery will be exposed wherever the army is not; or they do not concentrate them, and their army will be everywhere, but in fact nowhere. They want war? Let them try it! They will try it but once. And thus it turns out, that the very same thing that would be the cause of the war; would at the same time be indefensible by war. The same institution that wants protection, will at the same time disable its protectors. Yes, slavery, which can no longer be defended with arguments, cannot be defended with arms.

There is your dissolution of the Union for the perpetuation of slavery. The Southern States cannot reasonably desire it, for it would defeat the very object for which it would be undertaken; they cannot reasonably attempt it, for slavery would lie helpless at the feet of the North. Slavery, which may die a slow, gradual death in the Union, will certainly die an instantaneous and violent death if they attempt to break out of the Union. What then will the South do, in case of a Republican victory? I answer that question with another one: what *can* the South do in case of a Republican victory? Will there be a disturbance? If they know their own interests, the people of the South themselves will have to put it down. Will they submit? Not to Northern dictation; but will they not submit to their own good sense? They have considered us their enemies as long as they ruled us; they will find out that we are their friends as soon as we cease to be their subjects. They have dreamed so long of the blessings of slavery; they will open their eyes again to the blessings of liberty. They will discover that



they are not conquered, but liberated. Will slavery die out? As surely as freedom will *not* die out. [Great cheering.]\*

Slaveholders of America, I appeal to you. Are you really in earnest when you speak of perpetuating slavery? Shall it never cease? Never? Stop and consider where you are, and in what days you live.

This is the nineteenth century. Never, since mankind has a recollection of times gone by, has the human mind disclosed such wonderful powers. The hidden forces of nature we have torn from their mysterious concealment, and yoked them into the harness of usefulness; they carry our thoughts over slender wires to distant nations; they draw our wagons over the highways of trade; they pull the gigantic oars of our ships; they set in motion the iron fingers of our machinery; they will soon plow our fields and gather our crops. The labor of the brain has exalted to a mere bridling and controlling of natural forces the labor of the hand—and you think you can perpetuate a system which reduces *man*, however degraded, yet capable of development, to the level of a soulless machine?

This is the world of the nineteenth century. The last remnants of feudalism in the Old World are fast disappearing. The Czar of Russia, in the fulness of his imperial power, is forced to yield to the irresistible march of

\* The reader will remember that the argument, presented in this passage, was addressed to the people of the Slave States. The assertion that slavery would perish in consequence of the war has meanwhile been verified by fact. The rebels have, indeed, formed concentrations of military forces, but they have certainly not succeeded in protecting thereby the slaveholders in the possession of their "slave property." Had it not been the policy of the Government, at the commencement of the war, not to interfere with "slave property," the result would have been still more striking. Aside from this feature, it was at that time very difficult to foresee what character the war might possibly assume. As to the general bearing and tone of this argument on the dissolution of the Union, see note to Chicago speech, p. 29.

human progress, and abolishes serfdom. Even the Sultan of Turkey can no longer maintain the barbarous customs of the Moslem against the pressure of the century, and slavery disappears. And you, citizens of a Republic, you think you can arrest the wheel of progress with your Dred Scott decisions and Democratic platforms? [Enthusiastic cheers.]

Look around you, and see how lonesome you are in this wide world of ours. As far as modern civilization throws its rays, what people, what class of society, is there like you? Cry out into the world your "wild and guilty fantasy" of property in man, and every echo responds with a cry of horror or contempt; every breeze, from whatsoever point of the compass it may come, brings you a verdict of condemnation. There is no human heart that sympathizes with your cause, unless it sympathizes with the cause of despotism in every form. There is no human voice to cheer you on in your struggle; there is no human eye that has a tear for your reverses; no link of sympathy between the common cause of the great human brotherhood and you. You hear of emancipation in Russia, and wish it should fail. You hear of Italy rising, and fear the spirit of liberty should become contagious. Where all mankind rejoices, you tremble. Where all mankind loves, you hate. Where all mankind curses, you sympathize.

And in this appalling solitude you stand alone against a hopeful world, alone against a great century, fighting your hopeless fight — hopeless, hopeless as the struggle of the Indian against the onward march of civilization. Exhaust all the devices which the inventive genius of despotism may suggest, and yet how can you resist? In every little village school-house the little children who learn to read and write are plotting against you; in every laboratory of science, in every machine shop, the

human mind is working the destruction of your idol. You cannot make an attempt to keep pace with the general progress of mankind, without plotting against yourselves. Every steam whistle, every puffing locomotive, is sounding the shriek of liberty into your ears. From the noblest instincts of our hearts down to sordid greediness of gain, every impulse of human nature is engaged in this universal conspiracy. How can you resist? Where are your friends in the North? Your ever-ready supporters are scattered to the winds, as by enchantment, never to unite again. Hear them, trying to save their own fortunes, swear with treacherous eagerness that they have nothing in common with you. And your opponents? Your boasts have lost their charm, your threats have lost their terrors, upon them. The attempt is idle to cloak the sores of Lazarus with the lion-skin of Hercules. We know you. Every one of your boasts is understood as a disguised moan of weakness—every shout of defiance as a disguised cry for mercy. We will no longer be imposed upon. Do not deceive yourselves. This means not only the destruction of a party—this means the defeat of a cause. Be shrewder than the shrewdest, braver than the bravest—it is all in vain; your cause is doomed.

And in the face of all this, you insist upon hugging with dogged stubbornness your fatal infatuation? Why not manfully swing round into the grand march of progressive humanity? You say it cannot be done to-day. Can it be done to-morrow? Will it be easier twenty, fifty years hence, when the fearful increase of the negro population will have aggravated the evils of slavery a hundred-fold, and with it the difficulties of its extinction? Did you ever think of this? The final crisis, unless prevented by timely reform, will come with the inexorable certainty of fate, the more terrible the longer it is delayed.

Will you content yourselves with the criminal words, "after me the deluge?" Is that the inheritance you mean to leave to coming generations? an inheritance of disgrace, crime, blood, destruction? Hear me, slaveholders of America! If you have no sense for the right of the black man, no appreciation of your own interests, I entreat you, I implore you, have at least pity for your children!

I hear the silly objection, that your sense of honor forbids you to desert your cause. Sense of honor! Imagine a future generation standing around the tombstone of the bravest of you, and reading the inscription: "Here lies a gallant man, who fought and died for the cause—of human slavery." What will the verdict be? His very progeny will disown him, and exclaim: "He must have been either a knave or a fool!" There is not one of you who, if he could rise from the dead a century hence, would not gladly exchange his epitaph for that of the meanest of those who were hung at Charlestown.

Is it, then, so dishonorable to give up the errors of yesterday for the truths of to-day? to prevent future disasters by timely reforms? Since when has it ceased to be the highest glory to sacrifice one's prejudices and momentary advantages upon the altar of the common weal? but those who seek their glory in stubbornly resisting what is glorious, must find their end in inglorious misery.

I turn to you, Republicans of Missouri. Your countrymen owe you a debt of admiration and gratitude to which my poor voice can give but a feeble expression. You have undertaken the noble task of showing the people of the North that the Slaveholding States themselves contain the elements of regeneration, and of demonstrating to the South how that regeneration can be effected. You have inspired the wavering masses with confidence in the practicability of our ideas. To the North you have

given encouragement; to the South you have set an example. Let me entreat you not to underrate your noble vocation. Struggle on, brave men! The anxious wishes of millions are hovering around you. Struggle on, until the banner of emancipation is planted upon the capitol of your State, and one of the proudest chapters of our history will read: Missouri led the van, and the nation followed! [Immense and long-continued cheering.]



## VII.

### THE BILL OF INDICTMENT.

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SPEECH DELIVERED AT THE COOPER INSTITUTE, NEW  
YORK, ON THE 13<sup>TH</sup> OF SEPTEMBER, 1860.

*In the Presidential campaign of 1860 the Democratic party was divided into two fractions; the Southern wing, whose candidate was Mr. Breckinridge, and the Northern wing under the lead of Senator Douglas. Breckinridge had in the Northern States comparatively few adherents, so that he could not become dangerous to the success of the Republican cause. But the friends of Mr. Douglas endeavored to draw advantage from this very controversy in the Democratic party by representing Mr. Douglas as the champion of Northern feelings and interests, and by resting his claims to the Presidency on his individual merits and qualities. Mr. Douglas himself was travelling about making speeches, and had addressed a large concourse of people a few days previous to the Republican meeting of the 13th of September. These circumstances will explain the train of argument in the speech.*

MR. PRESIDENT AND GENTLEMEN :

In a contest of great principles like that which is now agitating the country, I am little inclined to discuss the personal qualities of candidates; but when the individual merits of a man are set up as his principal claim to the highest and most responsible office in the Republic, it is natural that we should feel obliged to examine his history and character with more than ordinary care.

It is a notorious fact that the friends of Judge Douglas, in the Northern States, solicit the vote of the people on the ground that he has done more for the freedom of the

Territories, and that he is a truer champion of free labor, and, besides, a greater statesman, than any living individual. Thus a personal issue is urged upon us, and we are ready to accept it. This will be the subject of my remarks to-night. I shall not transgress the limits of propriety, but I am determined to call things by their right names. [Applause.]

What is it that entitles Judge Douglas to the high-sounding appellation: "the champion of freedom," or "the greatest of living statesmen?" Is it his past career, or is it his present position? You can survey the history of this "champion of freedom" at a single glance. The Judge has his free-soil record—what Northern pro-slavery man has not? But there is hardly a prominent man in political life who has taken more pains than he to disclaim and apologize for his early anti-slavery sentiments. So we may drop this subject. What follows is more instructive.

In 1820, the Missouri Compromise was framed as a sacred compact between the two sections of the Union. By virtue of that compromise Missouri was admitted as a Slave State, and Arkansas as a Slave State; and thus the Free North, as one party to the compact, paid down its price for the slavery prohibition North of  $36^{\circ} 30'$ . Was Mr. Douglas ever heard to express any doubt as to the constitutionality of the Missouri Compromise, so long as it served to augment the number of Slave States? It was to him, as to all others, "a sacred and inviolable compact"—as sacred and inviolable as the Constitution itself; and he cursed the "ruthless hand" that should dare to break it down. When, after the Mexican war, the Territories acquired for this Union were to be organized, he was among the first and foremost who advocated the extension of the Missouri line across the whole continent. What would have been the result of that measure? In

the Territories acquired from Mexico slavery was abolished and prohibited by local legislation, but the extension of the Missouri line was calculated to admit slavery into all that part of it which lies South of  $36^{\circ} 30'$ . Mark well: So long as the Missouri Compromise served to introduce Slave States, he did not dream of its unconstitutionality. When, by the extension of the Missouri line, free territory could be converted into slave territory, he found it so eminently convenient, so excellent an arrangement, that he not only proposed to preserve it in its original extent, but to run it across the whole continent, to the shores of the Pacific Ocean.

But now the time arrives when Free States are to grow up under the guaranties of the same Missouri Compromise. A new light dawns upon Judge Douglas. He rises in the Senate chamber, and asserts that the Territory North of the Missouri line can no longer be exempted from slavery, because the exclusion of slavery from it—the very condition on which Missouri was admitted as a Slave State—was at war with the fundamental principles of the Constitution. The same man who had cursed as ruthless the hand that would violate the Missouri Compromise, as long as that compact was beneficial to slavery, tore it down *with his own hands* as soon as it was to serve the interests of free labor. And he is the truest “champion of freedom!” How wonderful a change! At the time when he proposed the extension of the Missouri line to the Pacific Ocean, he was either convinced of the unconstitutionality of that compromise, or he was not. If he was, how could he conscientiously propose the extension and perpetuation of a measure which he considered a crime against the Constitution? Were his conscience and his convictions hushed into silence by the interests of slavery? Or if he was not, how did it come to pass that he became so suddenly convinced of that unconstitu-

tionality the very moment that the preservation and execution of that compromise would have advanced the interests of free labor? How did it happen that his convictions, in all their prompt and wonderful transformations, always coincided so admirably with the interests of slavery? This is indeed a most astonishing coincidence, and I leave it to your sagacity to draw your conclusions. [Laughter.]

But Mr. Douglas is still the "true champion of free labor;" for it is asserted that the Nebraska Bill—the same measure which breaks down all barriers to slavery — will by that very operation introduce free labor into the Territories. The thing is speedily brought to a practical test. No sooner is the Nebraska Bill enacted, and the Missouri restriction wiped out, than emigrant-aid-societies are organized in the Slave States, especially in Missouri, for the purpose of introducing slavery into Kansas. The history of the Blue Lodges is familiar to you. Lawless bands of armed invaders pour into Kansas, take possession of the ballot-boxes, bowie-knife and revolver in hand, and control the elections by fraud and violence. Did Mr. Douglas ever utter a word of reproach or condemnation against the border ruffians of Missouri? Did he not most tenderly excuse their atrocities on the plea of self-defence, while it was a notorious fact that their organization had preceded that of the Free-State men? *And, mark well, that immigration was pro-slavery.*

Other emigrant aid societies are organized in the Northern States. Large numbers of men go to Kansas, armed, indeed, for self-defence, as every pioneer will be, but with the *bona fide* intention of settling down upon the soil of that Territory as permanent inhabitants; and while burning houses and trails of blood mark the track of the border ruffians, flourishing farms and industrious towns spring up under the hands of the Free-State men.

Do you remember how often Judge Douglas emptied the vials of his wrath and cast down denunciations upon the heads of free labor immigration? *And, mark well, that immigration was anti-slavery.*

A Legislature is set up by a band of lawless invaders, mostly Missourians—set up by the most atrocious violations of the ballot-box—set up in defiance of all the rules of constitutional government; that Legislature adopts the slave-code of Missouri as the laws of Kansas, and adds to them laws so outrageous in their nature that even Northern Democrats quailed under the opprobrium. Do you remember that Judge Douglas recognized that Legislature, although its criminal origin was manifest to all, as the highest law-giving authority of the Territory—and the laws enacted by them, although known to be the offspring of fraud and violence, as the valid laws of Kansas? Do you remember how he denounced every one who would not submit as a rebel and a traitor? *And, mark well, that Legislature and those laws were pro-slavery.*

The Free-State settlers of Kansas, then evidently a large majority of the inhabitants, go to work and frame a Constitution. That Constitution was gotten up in a way hardly more irregular than the Constitutions of many States. It was submitted to a vote of the people, and adopted by a large majority. Do you remember that Judge Douglas found no term of denunciation too vile to use against that Constitution, and that he stigmatized those who had framed it as traitors who must be struck down? *And, mark well, that Constitution, the choice of the people of Kansas, was anti-slavery.*

What a series of wonderful coincidences! [Laughter.] So far, whatever was calculated to benefit slavery in Kansas, Judge Douglas was sure to approve; whatever was calculated to serve the cause of free-labor, Judge Douglas was sure to denounce. But I must not forget



that he brought forward other reasons for his acts than the interest of slavery. Ah, indeed! Is it so extraordinary that a man of ability who stoops to do a mean act, should have wit enough to disguise it? Compare his plausibilities with these coincidences, and you will, with me, come to the conclusion that this "champion of free labor," if he really was an enemy to slavery, loved his enemies much better than a good Christian ought to do. [Loud laughter.]

But we will be just to him. Now we arrive at a period in his history in which he seems to have acquired some title to the esteem of his countrymen. We are so little accustomed to see that kind of statesmen do a fair thing, that our surprise is apt to stimulate our gratitude. I allude to the position assumed by Judge Douglas in the struggle about the Lecompton Constitution. A packed Convention has framed a Constitution fastening slavery upon Kansas, and refuses to submit it to a vote of the people. The President in a message urges the admission of Kansas as a State, under that Constitution as it stands. Judge Douglas, together with the Republicans, resists the measure; not, indeed, because he is opposed to slavery—for he solemnly and emphatically protests that he "does not care whether slavery be voted up or voted down"—but because it is uncertain whether the Lecompton Constitution embodies the will of the people. The slave power is arrayed against him, and for the first time in his life the claim of his being a "champion of freedom" seems to rise from the level of a ridiculous absurdity. I should feel little tempted to detract from the credit he gained by his attitude on that occasion, if the facts which preceded and followed it were not of so unmistakable a nature as to open our eyes to the peculiar concatenation of circumstances which made it almost impossible for him to act otherwise.

And here again we notice a series of most striking coincidences. It so happened that just about the time when the Lecompton question was before Congress, Douglas's term as a United States Senator was about to expire. He knew well, his popularity at home rested upon the popular belief that he really did work for the cause of free labor. How stupid must the man have been not to see that, saddled with the Lecompton Constitution, it would have been impossible for him to keep up that delusion. So he assumed the mask of an advocate of popular rights, coquetted with the Republicans in order to disarm their opposition, and went before the people of Illinois as a candidate for re-election to the Senate. What right have I to speak of his assuming a mask? I have that right, if I can show that he threw it off as soon as his object was gained. [Applause.]

Review his acts in connection with the Kansas struggle. Slavery and free labor had for years waged their fierce war about that unfortunate Territory with doubtful success. Now, at last, no sane man could any longer close his eyes to the fact, that, when the Lecompton outrage was perpetrated, the Free-State men outnumbered their opponents almost ten to one. Their victory might be delayed, but was no longer doubtful. How had Douglas acted, as long as slavery had a chance to gain the preponderance? Need I remind you of the unwavering solicitude with which he defended the border ruffians; of the fierceness with which he denounced the Free-State immigration; of the virulence with which he upheld the border-ruffian code of laws; of the promptness with which he put his foot upon the will of the people expressed in the Free-State Constitution; of his brutal, cynic sneers at the agonies of a people in distress? Was the election of the border-ruffian Legislature, the enactment of the border-ruffian code of laws, a less flagrant

violation of popular rights than the Lecompton Constitution? How could he uphold the former, and claim any credit for opposing the latter? Here is another most wonderful coincidence. Just so long as slavery had a chance in Kansas, Douglas stood upon the side of slavery. But no sooner was the victory of freedom sure, than Douglas was sure to stand upon the strongest side. [Applause.]

And now he is held up to our admiration as the "true champion of freedom." After having done more than any other man in perpetrating the outrage, what merit is there in helping to prevent its final consummation, when it has become manifest that, in *spite of him*, that consummation has become impossible? Look at it. The Nebraska Bill, as I heard my friend Grimshaw in Illinois illustrate it, had set fire to the edifice of Territorial liberty. The Republican fire companies are vigorously at work; the Republican engines are playing with full force, and then comes the very incendiary, Douglas, with a little teaspoonful of Anti-Lecompton water [laughter], throws it into the flames, and then swells himself up and claims to have extinguished the conflagration—and so he goes before the people of Illinois as the "true champion of freedom." [Applause and laughter.]

And this he would hardly have had the courage to do, had not, as is now known to all of us, the indignant threats of the gallant Broderick overawed him when he was about to compromise with Buchanan. [Applause.]

I repeat, I would never stoop to question the motives which actuated him in the Lecompton struggle, had not the acts which preceded it made his honesty doubtful; and had not those that followed it precluded all belief in the sincerity of his repentance. If he was honest, you will be obliged to confess, it is exceedingly hard to prove it on him. [Laughter and applause.]

On the strength of this exploit, he succeeded in carrying his point in Illinois; not indeed by a popular majority, for that was against him, but by an old gerrymandering apportionment. It was one of those lugubrious victories which consist in narrow escapes from total annihilation. [Laughter and applause.] But his seat is regained; and now he throws a wistful eye upon a higher seat, and remembers at once that the Democratic road to the White House leads through the slaveholding States. So he turns his face Southward without delay, and sets out on a trip down the Mississippi. He is at once betrayed into making a few remarks, here and there, to spontaneous gatherings. [Laughter.] Suddenly we find the man who had tried to delude the people of Illinois into the belief that, under the Kansas and Nebraska Bill, the people had a right to exclude slavery, in the South busily apologizing for it; and now behold the old Douglas again wielding the weapon of sophistry with unblushing boldness, and endeavoring to make his doctrine of popular sovereignty palatable to the Southern stomach.

The development of the popular sovereignty doctrine is one of the most instructive chapters in the history of our days. It shows how easily the popular mind can be obfuscated by a sophistical plausibility, and how easily correct principles are lost sight of in the confused struggle of interests and aspirations. Future generations will scrutinize with curious astonishment the history of our days, and wonder at the temporary success of so transparent a fraud. [Applause.] Permit me a brief digression.

Popular sovereignty, in the true sense of the term, means the sovereignty of all individuals, so regulated by law as to protect the rights and liberties of any one against the encroachments of any other, and so organized by political institutions as to give a common expression to the collective will. Its natural basis is the equality of

the rights of all men. Its natural end is the protection of all individuals in the exercise of their rights and in the enjoyment of their liberties. Hence it precludes the idea of slavery in all its forms. Apply this true popular sovereignty to the Territories, and we are willing to accept it—nay, it is the very thing which we are contending for. But is this what Douglas, in the Nebraska Bill, contemplated? By no means. His popular sovereignty is based upon the assumption that one class of men has the power—has the right—to strip another class of their natural rights, and to hold them as slaves.

For argument's sake, let us follow him in his course of reasoning, and suppose the white population of the Territories had the right to hold a portion of the inhabitants as property. So, we have to lower the standard of popular sovereignty one degree. Listen to the language of the Kansas and Nebraska Bill:

“It is the true intent and meaning of this act not to “legislate slavery into any State or Territory, nor to “exclude it therefrom, but to leave the people thereof “perfectly free to form and regulate their institutions in “their own way, subject only to the Constitution of the “United States.”

At first, one would suppose this bill gave the people of the Territories the sovereign right to introduce slavery, provided always that slavery could not go there unless introduced by a positive act of Territorial legislation. Is that what Douglas's principle of popular sovereignty contemplated? By no means. For, according to him, a slaveholder may introduce his slave property, and thereby introduce and establish slavery in a Territory, without that positive act of Territorial legislation.

We have, therefore, to lower the standard of popular sovereignty another degree! One would suppose that slavery so being admitted at first, the people of the Ter-



ritory would have at least the sovereign right to remove and exclude it by a positive act of Territorial legislation. Is that what Judge Douglas's principle of popular sovereignty contemplated? By no means! He told you at first that this was a question to be decided by the Supreme Court; then he told you that the sovereignty of a Territory remains in abeyance, suspended in the United States, in trust for the people, until they shall be admitted into the Union as a State; and, at last, after the Illinois campaign, he dropped the expression "excluding slavery" altogether. It is significant that the attempts of the people of Nebraska and Kansas to exclude slavery by law were promptly put down by the vetoes of the Governors of those Territories, vetoes exercised by virtue of the power conferred on the Territorial Governments by Douglas's own Nebraska Bill.

Thus we have descended two great steps from the true idea of popular sovereignty, without having reached Judge Douglas's great principle; and you will perceive that the true popular sovereignty has already disappeared long ago. But let us lower the standard of popular sovereignty still another degree, and we may hope that the deeper we sink the closer we may approach Judge Douglas's position. At last we find him, not with a principle, but with an assumption. "It matters not," said he, in his Freeport speech in August, 1858:

"It matters not what way the Supreme Court may hereafter decide as to the abstract question, whether slavery may go or may not go into a Territory under the Constitution, the people have the lawful means to introduce it or exclude it as they please; for the reason that slavery cannot exist a day or an hour anywhere unless it is supported by local police regulations. Those police regulations can only be established by the local Legislature; and if the people are opposed to slavery, they

“will elect representatives to that body who will, by  
“unfriendly legislation, prevent the introduction of it into  
“their midst.”

This, then, is the great principle of popular sovereignty. [Laughter.] It contemplates, not the general exercise and enjoyment of equal rights; not that slavery cannot go into a Territory unless the people introduce it by law; not that the people have the sovereign right to exclude it by a direct act of Territorial legislation; but that they may annoy and embarrass the slaveholder in the enjoyment of his slave property, so as to *tease* slavery out of the Territory, if they can. If, ten years ago, a man had undertaken to call this popular sovereignty, the people would have suspected him of serious mental derangement. Is not really this kind of popular sovereignty, according to Mr. Lincoln's striking illustration, “as thin as the homœopathic soup that was made by boiling the shadow of a pigeon that had been starved to death?” [Renewed laughter.] It would seem impossible to make it thinner, and yet Mr. Douglas undertakes this incredible task. After having tried to delude the voters of Illinois into the belief that, consistently with this position, the people of the Territory may, in some roundabout way, remove slavery, this “true champion of freedom” goes South, and proves there that slavery has a legal existence in the Territories. We find him at New Orleans; and the same man who at Freeport had told the people of Illinois, that it mattered not what the Supreme Court might decide, as to the abstract question, whether slavery may or may not go into a Territory—the same man speaks to the people of the south as follows:—

“I, in common with the Democracy of Illinois, accept  
“the decision of the Supreme Court of the United States  
“in the case of Dred Scott, as an authoritative interpretation of the Constitution. In accordance with that

“decision, we hold that slaves are property; and hence  
“on an equal footing with other property; and the owner  
“of a slave has the same right to move into a Territory,  
“and carry his slave property with him, as the owner of any  
“other property has to go there and carry his property.”

If there could be any misunderstanding as to the meaning of this sentence, he has removed the possibility of it by an expression he used in debate in the Senate on the 23d of February, 1859:—

“Slaves, according to the Dred Scott decision, being  
“property, stand on an equal footing with all other kinds  
“of property; and there is just as much obligation on the  
“part of the Territorial Legislature to protect slaves, as  
“every other species of property, as there is to protect  
“horses, cattle, dry-goods, and liquors.”

There is Douglas, as the candidate for the Senatorship of Illinois, who does not care what way the Supreme Court may decide; and here is Douglas, the candidate for the Presidency, who declares the decision of the Supreme Court to be the authoritative interpretation of the Constitution.

What, then, did the Supreme Court in the Dred Scott case decide? Let me quote from Howard's official report some of the points laid down in that case:—

“Every citizen has a right to take with him into the  
“Territory any article of property which the Constitu-  
“tion of the United States recognizes as property.

“The Constitution of the United States recognizes  
“slaves as property, and pledges the Federal Government  
“to defend it.

“That Act of Congress, therefore, prohibiting a citizen  
“of the United States taking with him his slaves, when  
“he removes into the Territory in question to reside, is an  
“act of authority over private property which is not  
“warranted by the Constitution.

“While it remains a Territory, Congress may legislate over it within the scope of its Constitutional powers, in relation to citizens of the United States, and may establish a Territorial government, and the form of the local government must be regulated by the direction of Congress, but with powers not exceeding those which Congress itself, by the Constitution, is authorized to exercise over the citizens of the United States in respect to the rights of property.”

If this needs any elucidation, I may furnish it by quoting a few more sentences from the decision:—

“No word can be found in the Constitution which gives Congress more power over slave property, or entitles property of that kind to less protection than property of any other description; *the only power conferred is the power coupled with the duty of guarding and protecting the owner in his rights.*”

This, then, is what Douglas calls the authoritative interpretation of the Constitution, and he well understands what it means; for has he not said that there is just as much obligation on the part of the Territorial Legislature to protect property in slaves as there is to protect any other species of property? Well, but what becomes of his great principle of popular sovereignty? What becomes even of that homœopathic decoction called unfriendly legislation? Congress can, according to the Dred Scott decision, which Douglas acknowledges to be “the authoritative interpretation of the Constitution,” confer no power which itself does not possess. The only power it possesses in regard to slave property is the power of guarding and protecting the owner in his rights, and that power is coupled with the duty to do so. Hence the only power Congress can confer upon the Territorial government, in relation to slave property, is the power

coupled with the duty of guarding and protecting the owner in his rights.

Thus we are obliged to lower the standard of popular sovereignty still another degree, in order to reach Douglas's great principle. [Laughter.] *It does not even consist in the right of the people to tease slavery out of a Territory: it consists in the power of a Territorial Legislature, coupled with the duty to pass acts for the protection of slavery, but by no means against it.* The assumed power to pass unfriendly laws seems to be changed into the duty to pass friendly laws. I call this popular sovereignty with a vengeance! It is like mock-turtle soup — there is mock enough, but not a particle of turtle. [Applause and laughter.]

It is true, Judge Douglas was in the habit of quibbling a little about the meaning of the Dred Scott decision; but the Wickliffe resolution, adopted by his friends at Baltimore, has helped him over his difficulties. It is to the following effect:

*“Resolved, That it is in accordance with the true interpretation of the Cincinnati platform, that, during the existence of a Territorial Government, the measure of restriction, whatever it may be, imposed by the Federal Constitution, on the powers of the Territorial Legislatures, over the subject of domestic relations, as the same has been or may hereafter be finally determined by the Supreme Court of the United States, shall be respected by good citizens, and enforced with promptness and fidelity by every branch of the Federal Government.”*

To all of which Judge Douglas, in his letter of acceptance, most graciously assents.

We hear no longer of the “rights of the people of the Territories to form and regulate their domestic institutions in their own way,” but now, “of the measure of restriction imposed upon the Territorial Legislatures



over the subject of domestic relations." The change is very significant; what are these restrictions? They are, or may hereafter be, finally determined by the Supreme Court of the United States. Let me remind you that previous to the election of Mr. Buchanan, whenever the question was put as to the right of property in slaves under a Territorial Government, Judge Douglas's regular reply was, "that is a question for the courts to decide." That answer was the forerunner of the Dred Scott decision. We are now told, "as shall hereafter be finally determined by the Supreme Court of the United States." What will follow? The restriction, already finally determined, we know; it is, that Government cannot impair the right of property in slaves, but has the power, coupled with the duty, to protect and guard the owner in his rights. "Restrictions which may hereafter be finally determined!" Heaven knows what they will be. But, "whatever they may be," Douglas is pledged to enforce them "with promptness and fidelity."

So it turns out that his popular sovereignty fastens slavery more irremovably upon a Territory, as such, than it is fastened upon South Carolina herself. The people of South Carolina in their sovereign capacity may abolish slavery whenever they see fit. The people of Kansas in their Territorial condition cannot. The people of South Carolina have the right to discourage slavery by unfriendly legislation; the people of Kansas are bound to guard and protect the slave owner in his rights, and are restricted from passing laws violating that obligation. The Federal Government has no power to interfere in South Carolina, but as soon as Kansas dares to disregard the "restriction," Judge Douglas, if he should become President of the United States, would stand pledged to enforce that restriction "with promptness and fidelity." And after having struck down the freedom of the Territories, this

"champion of freedom" will sneak behind the judicial despotism of the Supreme Court, and, like the murderer of Banquo, tell you, "Thou canst not say I did it!" [Cries of shame.]

But I say *he did do it*. [Applause.] The character of his doctrine of popular sovereignty was determined by the decision of the question, whether or not slave property, as such, could be introduced into a Territory before slavery was established there by a positive act of Territorial legislation. If this question was decided in the affirmative, the doctrine that slavery is the creature of local law, was totally abandoned. If slavery could exist in a Territory without being established by local law, then it existed there by a law higher than local law, and that could be no other than the Constitution of the United States. In this case, every sane man must see that slavery cannot be removed from a Territory by a mere act of the Territorial Legislature, whether direct or indirect; and Mr. Douglas need not affect any surprise at the doctrines his Southern opponents hold. They are the natural, the legitimate, the logical offspring of his own position. When he conceded that all-important point — and he did concede it — this "champion of freedom" was either aware of the consequence, or he was not. If he was not, he is liable to the charge of gross stupidity; if he was, he is liable to the charge of deliberate betrayal of the cause of free labor, covered with the grossest hypocrisy. In what character do you like your "champion of freedom" best? As one who has not sagacity enough to defend it, or as one who deliberately betrays it? There are cases where stupidity is no less criminal than hypocrisy. [Applause.]

This, then, is the "great principle of popular sovereignty." [Laughter.] This is "leaving the people perfectly free to form and regulate their own domestic insti-

tutions in their own way." I am warranted in saying that, if ever a gigantic, unscrupulous, shameless fraud was attempted upon a free people, it is this "great principle"—if history ever furnished an example of unblushing, scandalous, revolting hypocrisy, it is this "true championship of freedom." To fasten slavery irremovably upon the Territories, and call it "leaving the people perfectly free to regulate their own domestic institutions!"—to strip the people of every right to regulate their own affairs, and to call it popular sovereignty! Strike the word "demagogism" out of your dictionaries, if you do not want to apply it here. [Applause.] But, although we may understand how inordinate, desperate ambition should resort to such frauds, it remains truly wonderful that so many thousands have suffered themselves to be deceived by them. [Applause.]

Is it surprising that the "champion of freedom," who defends such theories, should be found a little unreliable in practice? How clamorous he was against the Lecompton Constitution! What a terrible idea, that a Territory should be forced into the Union as a State, with a Constitution not approved by the people! But now listen: At last the people of Kansas frame a new Constitution; it is submitted to the people; it is approved by a large majority. All conditions of admission rigorously complied with, they knock at the door of the Union, and we expect to see our "true champion of freedom" rush to the rescue with unabated zeal—for his great point is gained. But where is Douglas? The House of Representatives votes in favor of the admission; the decision of the question depends upon the action of the Senate. The matter is referred to the Committee on Territories. That committee consists of seven members; Douglas is one of them, but he does not attend their meetings. The vote of the committee stands three to three. Douglas's vote can

decide the question in the committee, in favor of the admission of Kansas, and it is well known how far the action of a committee goes to determine the action of the Senate; but Douglas does not vote! [Cries of "Shame!"] The question remains in this suspended state for some time. The country looks for the action of the committee; the action of the committee is blocked by a tie; but Douglas does not vote! Douglas, who had declaimed so fiercely against the admission, under a Constitution which the people *did not want*, does not vote when the admission is applied for with a Constitution which the people *do* want. Douglas, the "true champion of freedom," holding the fate of free Kansas in that committee in his hands; Douglas does not vote! How is this? When he opposed the Lecompton Constitution, he was a candidate for re-election to the Senate. But things have changed since. Douglas now acts as a candidate for the Presidency. The same man, who, in 1857, had to propitiate the free people of Illinois, has now to propitiate the people of the South; and instead of deciding the report of the committee in favor of the admission of Kansas as a Free State, he is busily engaged in preparing his 15th of May speech, which is to convince the slaveholders that his great principle of popular sovereignty is working favorably for the introduction of Slave States—the Free State of Kansas is kept out of the Union once more, and he is held up as the "true champion of freedom." Poor freedom, then! The champion's belt lies like a halter around her neck. [Loud applause.]

Here I will stop. I might go on for hours, piling fact upon fact, conclusion upon conclusion, argument upon argument, until the putrid accumulation of fraud and hypocrisy exposed to the sunlight would torture your very nostrils. [Laughter.] It is enough. I will dismiss Mr. Douglas, "the true champion of freedom," and devote

a few remarks to Mr. Douglas, "the greatest of living statesmen." [Renewed laughter and cheers.]

True statesmanship can rest upon no other basis than an intimate familiarity with the philosophy of government, and a thorough knowledge of the sources and effects of political institutions. It can have no other aim and end than to secure the rights and liberties, and to promote the interests, of the people by measures based upon sound constitutional principles. [Applause.] Let us see how "the greatest of living statesmen" stands the test. I shall confine myself to a few facts of vital importance.

It is one of the striking peculiarities of our Federal polity, that the different branches of our General Government enjoy a certain independence in the exercise of the functions respectively assigned to them. In order to guard against the dangers and abuses which might arise from that independence, the powers necessary for the exercise of those functions had to be carefully limited and strictly defined. Thus a system of checks and balances was established in our Constitution, which is calculated to render usurpation impossible. It is, indeed, said that the Executive branch of our Government is responsible to the people, but that responsibility consists only in its being liable to impeachment; for the Secretaries of the President do not, like the Ministers of the Crown of England, sit upon the benches of the Legislature, subject to the immediate control of the parliamentary majority. Our Executive, unlike that of other constitutional governments, is stable for a term of four years, removable only on the conviction of treason, bribery, and other high crimes and misdemeanors. But, already, Jefferson has told you that impeachment is a mere scarecrow. So the Executive moves independently within the circle of its own powers. It is, therefore, of vital importance that



this circle should be strictly drawn, and those powers of the Legislature which form a necessary supplement to the powers of the Executive, be jealously preserved.

If this system of checks and balances is of general necessity, it is doubly indispensable in all matters relating to the administration of our foreign policy. It is natural and proper that, in all diplomatic transactions with foreign governments, our Executive should be intrusted with a certain discretion. But the Cabinet of the President not being subject to our Legislature in the same manner as the British Ministry is to Parliament, it is essential that, in the absence of this immediate control, another system of checks should be placed around the Executive power. This was done in the Constitution, by making, not, indeed, the diplomatic transactions themselves, but their ends and results, immediately dependent upon the direct action of Congress. Thus, no treaty can be made and consummated without the approval of the Senate by a two-thirds vote; and Congress alone shall have power to declare war. Why was the war-making power not intrusted to the Executive? It is hardly necessary to describe to you the part which wars have played in the history of the world—the blood of millions spilled, not seldom for paltry causes; the happiness of generations destroyed; the prosperity of countries blighted for centuries; the rights of men trodden under foot; the progress of civilization set back for ages! Is it wonderful that the framers of our Constitution should not have intrusted a single officer with the formidable power of bringing all these calamities upon the Republic—an officer, too, who, for a certain time, does not stand under the immediate control of the representatives of the people? The war-making power—one most extensively involving the interests of the nation—is certainly one of the highest attributes of sovereignty, and it was most

wisely reserved to that branch of the Government in which the sovereignty of the people is most comprehensively represented. The power to declare war being withheld from the Executive, and expressly lodged in Congress, it follows that the Executive can have no authority to use warlike measures unless specially authorized by Congress; for what would the exclusive power to *declare* war be worth to Congress, if the power to use belligerent measures without special authority — that is, *to bring on* or *make war* — were vested in the Executive? This is one of the distinguishing features of our constitutional system. It cannot be changed without breaking down the safeguards of our national security. No man who understands the spirit of American institutions will fail to see this, and he who does not, may be said not to comprehend the tendency of our fundamental laws. Is it not surprising that we should find such a man in him who is held up to us as “the greatest of living statesmen?”

For a number of years, wherever there was a difficulty between this and a foreign government, Mr. Douglas endeavored again and again to invest the President with the power of using warlike measures at his own discretion, without waiting for the action of Congress. Here is a bill introduced by Douglas, on the 24th of May, 1858: —

“*Be it enacted, &c.*, That in cases of flagrant violations  
“of the laws of nations by outrage upon the flag, or soil,  
“or citizens of the United States, or upon their property,  
“under circumstances requiring prompt redress, and when,  
“*in the opinion of the President*, delay would be incompatible  
“with the honor and dignity of the Republic, the President is hereby authorized to employ such force as HE  
“may deem necessary to prevent the perpetration of such  
“outrages, and to obtain just redress and satisfaction for  
“the same when perpetrated; and it shall be his duty to  
“lay the facts of each case, with the reason for his action

“in the premises, before Congress, at the earliest practicable moment, for such further action thereon as Congress may direct.”

This bill was introduced at a time when vessels belonging to the British navy, in the Gulf of Mexico, undertook to stop and search American merchantmen, on the suspicion of their being slavers. The bill did not pass; but whenever there was an opportunity, be it in a discussion on appropriations for the navy, or on the occasion of some foreign difficulty, he again and again tried to bring about the fatal transfer of power. It was on the 18th of February, 1859, when he disclosed his views more fully and emphatically than ever before. The President, in a special message, asked for special authority to protect American citizens on the transit route. Then Mr. Douglas expressed himself as follows:

“I think the President ought to have the power to redress sudden injuries upon our citizens, or outrages upon our flag, without waiting for the action of Congress. The Executive of every nation on earth has that authority, under their respective forms of government. \* \* \* I go further, sir. I would intrust the Executive with the authority when an outrage is perpetrated upon our ships and commerce, to punish it instantly, when he thinks the interest and the honor of the nation require prompt action. I would make this principle general in its application. I desire the President of the United States to have as much authority to protect American citizens and the American flag abroad as the Executive of every other civilized nation on earth possesses. \* \* \* I am willing to adopt the principle that this authority shall be vested in the President of the United States, as a rightful authority and a permanent rule of action, applicable all over the world, whenever HE thinks American interest and American honor require

“it to be exerted. \* \* \* When it is known that our Executive has the same authority outside of the United States that the *British Premier* and the *French Emperor*, or the head of any other nation, possesses, you will find there will be a less number of outrages,” &c.

If Mr. Douglas had brought forward propositions like this in the heat of debate, aroused by warlike excitement, we might excuse him on the plea that his temper ran away with his judgment. But the frequent, deliberate, persistent reiteration of these views, must urge the conviction upon us that they have become with him a settled political doctrine. Did he ever consider the extent and consequences of the change he demands? Does he know what it means, that the President shall have the power, without waiting for the action of Congress, to use the army and navy when he—not when Congress, but when *he*—thinks the interests of the country require it? Suppose the President be a man of excitable temper—of more valor than discretion—or a man of inordinate ambition—or a wily politician, unscrupulous enough to involve the country in war in order to divert popular attention from home difficulties. Suppose such a President has the power to use the armed forces of the United States when he thinks fit. Will not our peace and security be entirely at the mercy of his temper, his ambition, or his unscrupulousness?

This is not so dangerous, says Mr. Douglas, for “not every belligerent act leads to war.” No, certainly not; but if there is anything in the world apt to lead to war, it is a belligerent act. [Laughter.] It is true, according to Mr. Douglas’s bill, the President will have to report to Congress “at the earliest practicable moment;” but will not the President be able, by an indiscreet use of the army or navy, to involve the country in war, to array nation against nation, long before that “earliest practicable moment” arrives? It is true Congress will, after a while,

have power to stop the war; but are you not aware that ours is a government which depends not always on a calm public opinion, but sometimes also on the passions of the people? If once, by the measures of the President, we are in active hostilities—if once the intoxicating music of artillery has started the warlike enthusiasm of the people—if once the fighting spirit of the masses is aroused by the sight of blood—will not then what was commenced against the judgment of the people be pushed on by their passions?

Mr. Douglas urged his proposition as often as there was a speck of war in the horizon. But those difficulties with Great Britain and the Central American Republics, for the prosecution of which he demanded that the Executive be invested with power to use warlike measures, have been settled by diplomatic transactions. Our peaceful relations with foreign governments were hardly disturbed. Not a drop of blood was shed. The honor of the Republic remained intact, the Constitution inviolate. Suppose Mr. Douglas's notions had prevailed, and he had been President of the United States, clothed with the discretionary power he demanded, I ask you most seriously, and invite you to ponder the question, what would have been the result then? How many outrages, real or imaginary, would he have punished with the army or navy, "without waiting for the action of Congress?" How often would *he*, unrestrained by Congress, have deemed instant redress necessary? Into how many follies would his childish hatred of Great Britain have betrayed him? In how many wars would his sensation policy have involved us within these last few years? With the blood of your sons, you would have paid the price of his indiscretions. Let the President have the power that Mr. Douglas demands for him, and the question of peace or war, of prosperity or desolation, will depend upon the temper of



a single individual. Put Mr. Douglas in the Presidential chair, and give him, as he demands, the power of the French Emperor, and he will furnish not the prudence, but certainly the arbitrariness.

But he contends that our Executive must have that power, because *the Executive of every other nation has it*. Indeed! Does he not know that just there is the difference between our system of government and those of other countries? [Cheers.] Did it never occur to him that the establishment of imperial power in this Republic would require the entire overthrow of our system of checks and balances? Does he not know that, even in the hands of a British Premier, this power is less formidable than it would be in the hands of a President, since the British Premier is subject to the immediate control of a parliamentary majority, and liable to be voted down and dismissed at any moment, which the President and his Secretary of State are not? Oh, "greatest of living statesmen," if thou dost not know that, every sweet little schoolboy can tell thee. [Laughter.] But there you see him, "in the fullness of his ignorance of this vast subject, in the maturity of his incapacity to apprehend its merits" [laughter], as Lord Brougham would style it, attempting to trample down the constitutional safeguards which surround the liberties and the security of the nation. Such ignorance is dangerous when coupled with such pretensions. Let that "greatest of living statesmen" study awhile the peculiar features which distinguish the republican government of America from the monarchical governments of the Old World. Give him an opportunity to learn that an American President or Secretary of State was never intended to be a British Premier or a French Emperor. Let him learn to appreciate that system of nice balances of power in our Constitution, which is the principal safeguard of our freedom and security. But do

not speak of placing him, such as he is, in the office of highest responsibility. If you want a *safe* man to administer your laws, select him among those who understand their spirit; not one who means to cushion his Presidential chair with imperial powers, and who would take delight in playing like a reckless boy with the clubs of Hercules. [Applause.]

It is my suspicion that Mr. Douglas tried to effect that centralization of power in the hands of the President, expecting to be President himself, and that then he would use it for the purpose of plunging the country into warlike enterprises to result in the conquest of Cuba and a part of Mexico, which policy of conquest would relieve him of the difficulties in which his position upon the slavery question has involved him. I give this as my suspicion. You may judge for yourselves whether it is supported by any moral evidence growing out of his past career and present situation. But the measure he urged and advocated is so dangerous and detestable in itself, that no ulterior design can make it more damnable. It certainly is one of the acts dictated by the evident desire to retrieve the lost favor of the slavery propagandists by outdoing them in everything not immediately connected with the Territorial question. This may be considered a grave charge, and I will substantiate it at once, for in these attempts Judge Douglas's statesmanship shines with more than ordinary lustre. [Laughter.]

John Brown had made his insurrectionary attempt in Virginia. The Republicans openly disapproved of the act, and denounced it in good faith, as they would disapprove and denounce every interference with the laws and institutions of other States as a violation of the spirit of our institutions which furnish for every evil a lawful remedy. But the South was excited, and Douglas saw a chance for himself. He pounced upon it with almost indecent eager-

ness, morbidly anxious to anticipate the action of the committee on the Harper's Ferry affair, which was expected to offer propositions applicable to the case. On the 22d of January, 1860, he introduced the following resolution in the Senate :

“ *Resolved*, That the Committee on the Judiciary be instructed to report a bill for the protection of each State and Territory in the Union against invasion by the authorities or inhabitants of any other State or Territory, and for the suppression and punishment of conspiracies or combinations in any State or Territory with intent to invade, assail, or molest, the government, property, or institutions, of any other State or Territory of the Union.”

The true intent and meaning of this resolution was made plain by the speech with which the Judge accompanied it. After having endeavored to show that the Constitution confers upon our Federal Government the power to do what the resolution contemplates, he then defines his object as follows :

“ Sir, I hold that it is not only necessary to use the military power when the actual case of invasion shall occur, but to authorize the judicial department of the Government to suppress all conspiracies and combinations in the several States with intent to invade a State, or molest or disturb its Government, its peace, its citizens, its property, or its institutions. *You must suppress the conspiracy, the combination with intent to do the act, and then you will suppress it in advance.* \* \* \* I demand that the Constitution be executed in good faith, so as to punish and suppress every combination either to invade a State, or to molest its inhabitants, or to disturb its property, or to subvert its institutions and its government. I believe this can be effectually done by authorizing the United States Courts in the several States to take juris-

"diction of the offence, and punish the violation of the law with appropriate punishments."

So much about the way in which the combinations can be and ought to be suppressed and punished. Now, what and where are the combinations?

"Sir," says the Judge, "what were the causes which produced the Harper's Ferry outrage? Without stopping to adduce the evidence in detail, I have no hesitancy in expressing my firm and deliberate conviction that the Harper's Ferry crime was the natural, logical, and inevitable result of the doctrines and teachings of the Republican party, as explained and enforced in their platform, their partisan presses, their pamphlets and books, and especially in the speeches of their leaders, in and out of Congress. \* \* \* The great principle that underlies the Republican party is violent, irreconcilable, eternal warfare upon the institution of American slavery with a view to its ultimate extinction throughout the land."

This language is plain. There is the dangerous combination *with intent* to carry on a violent warfare against the institutions of other States. Now, let us see what the Judge is going to do with the unfortunate combination to which, I am sorry to say, most of us belong:

"Sir," says the Judge, "give us such a law as the Constitution contemplates and authorizes, and I will show the Senator from New York that there is a Constitutional mode of repressing the irrepressible conflict. I will open the prison door, and allow the conspirators against the peace of the Republic and the domestic tranquillity of other States to select their cells, wherein to drag out a miserable life as a punishment for their crimes against the peace of society."

But, in order to remove all doubt as to what the conspiracy and combination is, he proceeds:

“Can any man say to us that, although this outrage has been perpetrated at Harper’s Ferry, there is no danger of its recurrence? Sir, is not the Republican party still embodied, organized, confident of success, and defiant in its pretensions? Does it not now hold and proclaim the same creed as before the invasion? Those doctrines remain the same. Those teachings are being poured into the minds of men throughout the country by means of speeches and pamphlets and books, and through partisan presses. The causes that produced the Harper’s Ferry invasion are now in active operation. \* \* \* Mr. President, the mode of preserving peace is plain. This system of sectional warfare must cease. The Constitution has given the power; and all we ask of Congress is to give the means, and we, by indictments and convictions in the Federal Courts of the several States will make such examples of the leaders of such conspiracies as will strike terror into the hearts of others; and there will be an end of this crusade. Sir, we must check it by crushing out the conspiracy and combination; and then there can be safety.”

I confess that, when I read that speech and the resolution in defence of which it was made, I stood horror-struck — not as though I feared that a Congress *could be found* so degenerate as to pass such a law, but because a Senator *had been found* who had the effrontery to advocate it in the open halls of an American Legislature. [Loud applause.] This is not a mere figure of speech. I do not exaggerate. Only look at it. A treasonable attempt has been committed. The offenders are punished. Mr. Douglas introduces a proposition for a law intended to prevent a repetition of the attempt. He pretends to discover the origin of the treasonable attempt in the opinions and doctrines of a great national party. He charges that party with waging a sectional warfare and



crusade against the institutions of some of the States, and declares that this crusade is carried on by speeches, pamphlets, books, and partisan presses — by ideas being poured into the minds of the people. He declares that there can be no peace as long as those causes which produced the treasonable attempt remain in active operation. He proposes to check this crusade by crushing out the conspiracies and combinations by which it is carried on; and the means by which he intends to crush them out are indictments and convictions in the Federal Courts, making such examples of the leaders as will strike terror into the hearts of others. He proposes to open prison-cells for them, wherein to drag out a miserable life. And who are the criminals thus to be brought to a terrible punishment? The men who dare to think and say that human slavery is wrong. This is the proposition submitted to the Senate of the American Republic — not by the King of Naples, not by the Vizier of the Turkish Sultan, not by the Chief of Police of the Russian Czar, not by one of the terrorists of the French Revolution — but by an American Senator, on the 23d of July, 1860. I will not stoop to defend the Republican party against his accusations. They are of so ridiculous, so preposterous a nature, as not to call for the serious notice of any candid man [Applause.] But no matter. Let us embody the intent and meaning of Mr. Douglas's resolution and speech in the shape of a law. It will probably read as follows:

“SEC. 1. *Be it enacted, &c.*, That if any person or persons, “residing in any State or Territory, shall unlawfully “combine or conspire together, with intent to invade, “assail, or molest the government, inhabitants, property, “or institutions, of any other State or Territory, or if any “person or persons, with intent as aforesaid, shall counsel, “advise, or attempt to procure any riot, invasion, unlawful assembly, or combination, whether such conspiracy,

“threatening, counsel, advice, or attempt, shall have the  
“proposed effect or not, he or they shall be deemed guilty  
“of a high misdemeanor; and upon conviction before any  
“Court of the United States having jurisdiction thereof,  
“shall be punished by a fine not exceeding — dollars,  
“or by imprisonment during a term not less than —  
“years, nor exceeding — years; and further, at the dis-  
“cretion of the court, may be holden to find security for  
“his or their good behaviour, in such sum and for such  
“time as the court may direct.”

This section would cover the conspiracies and combinations themselves. But Douglas says that such treasonable things will be repeated as long as the causes from which they spring remain in active operation. He therefore wants to crush out the causes; which may be done by section second:

“SEC. 2. *And be it further enacted*, That if any person,  
“inhabitant of any one State or Territory, shall write,  
“print, utter, or publish, or shall cause or procure to be  
“written, printed, uttered, or published, or shall know-  
“ingly or willingly authorize or aid in writing, printing,  
“uttering, or publishing, any scandalous or malicious  
“writing or writings against the government, inhabitants,  
“laws, or institutions of other States or Territories,  
“with intent to defame the said government [laughter],  
“inhabitants, laws, or institutions, or to excite against  
“them the hatred of the good people of any of the States,  
“or to excite any unlawful combinations for invading,  
“assailing, or molesting, the government, inhabitants,  
“property, or institutions of other States or Territories,  
“being thereof convicted before any Court of the United  
“States having jurisdiction thereof, he shall be punished  
“by a fine not exceeding — dollars, and by imprison-  
“ment not exceeding — years.”

Every candid person will at once admit that these two

sections, as I have drawn them, contain nothing — not a single point, not a single expression — that is not directly and expressly suggested by Mr. Douglas's resolution and speech. It so happens that a law like this is not without precedent in the history of this Republic. It is not quite unknown to our own statute-book; for the two sections I have laid before you, as embodied with scrupulous accuracy in Mr. Douglas's propositions, *are a literal copy of the notorious sedition law of 1798*. I only put in "government, inhabitants, property, or institutions of other States and Territories," instead of "Government of the United States, or either House of Congress." The rest is exactly alike; no, let me not slander the sedition law. The terms of imprisonment prescribed in the sedition law are moderate, not exceeding two and five years, while Mr. Douglas insists on his victims "dragging out in their prison-cells their miserable lives," for which ten years would evidently not be sufficient. Then, this sedition law was enacted only for a very limited period, after which it was to expire, while Mr. Douglas intends the conspiracy act to be a permanent institution of the country. These two features make the sedition law eminently liberal in comparison with Douglas's conspiracy bill.

There may be some old man among us who remembers the time when the sedition law was enacted. He will tell you that the same act which was intended to prevent insurrection, led people upon the very brink of an insurrection; he will tell you that patriots, horrified at that attempt against the liberties of the people, thought of the necessity of a second revolution. The excitement of those days has left its monument in the history of this country. That monument is the Kentucky and Virginia resolutions, drawn by Jefferson and Madison. These resolutions were the loud outcry of patriotic hearts against the first flagrant attempt at a centralization of governmental power. The

Democratic party has endorsed them again and again. It claims Jefferson as its father. What would Jefferson, the author of the Kentucky resolutions, say of his degenerate offspring who have nominated a man for the Presidency who attempts to repeat the most tyrannical and outrageous act of the Federalists in a more outrageous form? Would he not tell them that they must be mistaken in their ancestry? [Cheers.]

Let me show you the consequences of the measure, and you will understand why its forerunner created such serious alarm and apprehension. So far, our political parties have been fighting with arguments. The victors obtained possession of the Constitutional power, and administered the Government, but had no power to violate the rights and liberties of those that were defeated. However the contest of parties may have ended, the peace of the country was never materially disturbed, for the vanquished knew that their individual security was not impaired. Such was the uniform result of the fight with arguments. But let the political parties once begin to fight with indictments—put into their hands the two-edged weapon of persecution—and, whatever delusion you may indulge in, the liberties of the people will be no more secure in America than they are in Austria and Naples.

There is one kind of despotism more terrible than that of kings—that is, the despotism of political parties. [Loud applause.] Their tendency is not only to defeat but to oppress their opponents. However pure their first intentions may be, they will, in the heat of political contests, insensibly drift into that irresistible current. There is but one way to prevent this. It is, that the means of oppression and persecution be carefully kept out of their reach by strictly limiting and circumscribing the powers of the Government. Do not say that these

dangerous tendencies may be averted by a change of parties. It is oppression that engenders an oppressive spirit; upon persecution follows retaliation and revenge—that is, new persecution, and so on. You may know where it began, but not where it will end. The framers of our Constitution understood that well; they defined the crimes of which the Federal Courts should have jurisdiction with scrupulous nicety. They laid down the doctrine that treason against the Government should consist in levying war against the United States, and in giving aid and comfort to their enemies, and nothing else; and that no person should be convicted of treason unless upon testimony of two witnesses, not to “combination with treasonable intent,” but to the *overt act*; thus carefully guarding against the idea of constructive treason. They knew well that the usual rules of legal construction in regard to common crimes should not be applied to political matters in which conscience and the freedom of opinion are involved, because justice in one, might become oppression and tyranny in the other case. But even these Constitutional safeguards appeared so insufficient to the people of those days, that in the amendments to the Constitution they surrounded the fundamental rights and liberties of the citizen with a new bulwark of emphatic declarations. Hence this fierce, indignant, uncompromising opposition to every measure tending to give latitude to the power of the Government over individual rights.

Judge Douglas seems to have no conception of the groundwork upon which the safety of popular liberty rests. Let him not pretend to say that he intended a law for the prevention of political offences; for he ought to know, as every well-informed man knows, that of all the laws in the world which fasten the chains of despotism upon mankind, there is hardly one which does not



rest upon the pretext that political offences must be prevented. Prevention of mischief is the snare with which people in all ages and all countries have been prevented from asserting their liberties. [Applause.] Preventive laws are the poison with which freedom is killed. [Renewed applause.] It is said that, years ago, an American citizen met Prince Metternich in the city of Brussels. You remember who Prince Metternich was. The history of the world hardly knows a minister who had to answer for more tears and curses of crushed nations. The American showed him the Constitution of the United States, and asked his opinion of it. "This Constitution," said the Prince, "lacks but one thing, and I can govern the Empire of Austria with it." "What is that?" asked the American, with astonishment. "It is the power of the Central Government to pass preventive laws." What a pity Prince Metternich is dead! In Judge Douglas he would have found the man of his heart. [Laughter.] Put the Judge's conspiracy bill upon our statute-book, and declare it constitutional, and the deficiency is supplied. Prince Metternich is willing to govern Austria, after his fashion, with the Constitution of the United States. Place the power to indict and punish for combinations, and for criminal intent in political matters, into the hands of our Federal Judges, those petty proconsuls who feel big when they can show their power, and we shall soon have a little Star Chamber in every judicial district, a little Fouquier Tinville to act as prosecuting attorney, and a little Jeffries to pass the sentences of the court; there will be a government spy to smell out treasonable combinations wherever three or four of you are assembled, and the cells of your prisons will be filled with men who have the spirit to think and speak about slavery as Washington, Jefferson, Madison, and Franklin, thought and spoke. [Long-continued applause.]

And there are those who dare to call the man who proposed to inaugurate such a system of policy a "great statesman." To the honor of Southern men be it said, in both cases, as well when he proposed to confer the war-making power upon the President as when he introduced the new sedition law, he had the mortification of being put down by a slaveholder. It was, in both cases, Jefferson Davis, the leader of the fire-eaters, who had the spirit to vindicate our republican institutions against the disgusting schemes of the Northern demagogue. [Applause.]

But a Northern man, also, was listening with indignant astonishment to Douglas's speech in favor of the new sedition law; that was the brave John Hickman of Pennsylvania [loud cheers], the Anti-Lecompton Democrat who believed in what he said. And when he left the Senate Chamber, he broke out in the words, "On thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat, all the days of thy life." [Applause.]

And well might he say so, for the proposition whispered into the ears of the first of our kind by the serpent of Paradise was hardly more infamous and infernal than the proposition Douglas whispered in the ears of the present generation. [Loud applause.]

Where did Mr. Douglas learn these doctrines? He has been in Europe. Unable to comprehend the means by which liberty is to be preserved in this country, he seems to have studied the means by which people are enslaved there. Not in England, but in France and Russia, he found much to admire. (I do not know whether he visited Austria and Naples.) He basked in the sunshine of the smiles of the Czar Nicholas. The smiles of a despot sank deeply into his heart, and this conspiracy bill grew out of it. [Applause.]

And this is your "greatest of living statesmen!" If this is the ruling statesmanship of our days, then good-

night, dearly-bought liberties! good-night, proud American Republic! good-night, great beacon of struggling humanity! If it is statesmanship to subvert the principles of the Constitution, to undermine the liberties of the people, to place the security of the individual at the mercy of a centralized government, then, indeed, he is one of the greatest, and his statue deserves to be erected side-by-side with that of the illustrious Catiline of Rome, and the patriotic Strafford of England. [Loud applause.] I do not fear that the man who made the infamous attempt will be elevated to the highest trust in this Republic, for a just fate has already irrevocably decreed against him; but I do fear that there may be thousands of men who will not have spirit enough to stigmatize him with their repudiation. I appeal to you, American freemen! Your hearts cannot harbor a sincere feeling of gratitude for the heroes and sages who gave liberty to this land, if they do not harbor a curse for the man who attempts to destroy it with his insidious schemes. [Applause.]

Let me proceed: It would seem that the policy of a man who introduces and advocates such measures must spring either from the profoundest ignorance of the principles upon which the liberty of men is maintained, or an innate love of the principles by which the liberty of men is subverted. It will, therefore, surprise you a little when I tell you that Douglas's system of policy rests upon the basis of a profound philosophical doctrine, concerning the only safe foundation upon which human liberty rests. [Laughter.] It has always struck me as very remarkable, and it may have occurred to a great many of you, that Mr. Douglas's mind, with all its acuteness and fertility of resources, is exceedingly barren of original conceptions. All the speeches he has delivered since 1854 carry a peculiar flavor of staleness about them. [Laughter.] They contain nothing but some stereotyped and some-

what commonplace ideas, clad in a sonorous, hollow swell of language, which derives its principal charm from the animal vigor and energy with which it is puffed out. [Loud laughter.]

But his speeches do contain one original idea, and I tell you that is a bright one; it belongs all to him; nobody ever advocated it before, and nobody will hereafter. [Laughter.] We have been laboring under the impression that Douglas did not care whether slavery be voted up or down; but we must beg his pardon—it turns out that he does care; for the only original idea he can boast of is, that slavery must necessarily exist for the sake of—*variety*. [Laughter.] Do not laugh, I pray you—it is a very serious matter—it is the fundamental principle upon which Mr. Douglas's whole statesmanship rests; and as he is the greatest statesman alive, it certainly deserves serious consideration. He tells us that it is the very issue upon which he conducted the canvass in Illinois in 1858;—it is the very ground on which he placed the necessity of his conspiracy bill, and he has peddled it all over the Union in numberless speeches.

The original idea, as expressed in his own language, is simply this: "I assert," said he, in his speech opening the canvass of 1858, "that the great fundamental principle which underlies our complex system of State and Federal Governments contemplates diversity and dissimilarity in local institutions and domestic affairs of each and every State in the Union, or thereafter to be admitted. I therefore conceive that Mr. Lincoln has totally misapprehended the great principles upon which our Government rests. Uniformity in local and domestic affairs would be destructive of State rights, of State sovereignty—of personal liberty and personal freedom. *Wherever the doctrine of uniformity is proclaimed—that all the States must be free or slave; that all the labor must be*

*“white or black; that all the citizens of the different States must have the same privileges, or must be ruled by the same regulations—you have destroyed the greatest safeguards which our institutions have thrown around the rights of the citizen. From this view of the case, I am driven irresistibly to the conclusion that diversity, dissimilarity, variety in all our local and domestic institutions, is the great safeguard of our liberties. \* \* \* I repeat, that uniformity in our institutions is neither possible nor desirable.”*

This may sound very profound, but it will not require many words to show you how exceedingly ridiculous it is. Whatever your opinions of the Judge's statesmanship may be, permit me to say, that whenever he attempts to act the philosopher, he becomes—not to put too fine a point upon it—a little funny. [Laughter.]

His argument is, that there is a variety of interests or domestic affairs in the country; that a variety of local institutions grows out of them; that upon this variety of institutions our Federal system of government rests; that the Federal system of government is the great safeguard of our liberties; that, consequently, in order to preserve our liberties, it is necessary to preserve a variety of domestic affairs and local institutions. The question arises, if that variety of domestic affairs and local institutions did not exist, would that render the Federal system of government impossible? In other words, would a people, among whom there is no such variety of domestic affairs and local institutions, be incapable of freedom?

The original States entered into a union as separate organizations—whether distinct and separate on the ground of a variety of interests, or for any other reason, is needless to discuss; for if their institutions and interests had been ever so uniform, it is evident that they could and would not have consolidated. But a conclusive refutation of the Judge's theory lies nearer. The people



of Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, and Wisconsin, are nearly all depending upon the same resources—these States are all essentially agricultural, and, besides, have some shipping interest upon the great lakes. Their domestic affairs and local institutions are essentially the same. Their system of labor is the same—neither of them holds slaves. The uniformity of free labor was introduced there by the ordinance of 1787. According to the Judge's theory, they must consolidate; for there is among them no variety of domestic affairs and local institutions to keep them asunder. It might be said that they cannot consolidate now, on account of Constitutional obstacles. Granted, for argument's sake. But that vast extent of land was consolidated once in one great, solid mass, called the Northwestern Territory. Why did it not remain consolidated? Why was it cut up into different Territories and States, since their domestic interests were the same, their local institutions the same, their system of labor the same? There was complete uniformity, and yet the very opposite of consolidation. All these things remain essentially the same. And do they desire to consolidate? And is it necessary to make half of them Slave States in order to keep them asunder? It is preposterous. But this example shows that not Mr. Lincoln, but Judge Douglas, must have entirely misconceived the source from which our political institutions spring.

That source is nothing else than the instinct of self-government animating our people. Why do we cut up our States into counties and townships—even those States in which the interests and domestic affairs of the people are everywhere quite uniform? For the simple reason that the instinct of self-government demands that all the functions of sovereignty which the people can exercise by direct action, should remain in the hands of the people; and that all political powers which cannot be adminis-

tered by that direct action, should be so organized as to remain as near the original source of sovereignty as possible. This renders necessary such division and local organizations as will place the direct administration of the nearest home affairs immediately in the hands of the people. The affairs a little more remote and general are intrusted to the State Governments, subject to the immediate control of the people; while the affairs of interest still more remote and general are put into the hands of the Federal Government. This ramification, division, and subdivision of political power is carried out no less where there is a uniformity of domestic affairs and local institutions, than where there exists variety. It will remain such just as long as the people insist upon administering their affairs by as direct an exercise of sovereignty as possible, and no longer. To pretend that this ramification of political power into a complex gradation of functions cannot exist without there being a variety of interests and domestic institutions, would be to say that the people among whom there is no such variety cannot be free; and that is a nonsense which the merest schoolboy would be ashamed of.

But suppose, for argument's sake, a variety of interests were really so great and indispensable a prop and pillar of our institutions of self-government, is Judge Douglas unacquainted with the difference between manufacturing Massachusetts and Connecticut and commercial New York—between mining Pennsylvania and agricultural Illinois? But that variety does not seem to be sufficient for the Judge—there is still too much uniformity in it. He insists that “where the doctrine of uniformity is proclaimed, that all the States must be free or slave—that all labor must be white or black”—our liberties must necessarily go by the board; therefore we must have more variety. The variety of manufacturing and commercial,

of mining and agricultural activity, is sadly insufficient. He insists that there must be a little variety of freedom and slavery, of white and black labor; and that seems to be his favorite mixture; his cardinal, fundamental, *sine quâ non* variety [laughter]; and not only have we no right to establish uniform free labor by encroaching upon the rights of the States, but, as a general thing, the extinction of his *favorite variety* "would be neither possible nor desirable." He declares it to be "a fatal heresy to proclaim that there *can* or *ought* to be uniformity among the different States of this Union." It would then, according to the Judge, not be desirable that free labor should prevail everywhere, for that would create uniformity, and uniformity would be the death of freedom.

And now mark that wonderful muddle of nonsense in the head of that "greatest of living statesmen." [Laughter.] Our liberties rest upon our Federal system of government; our Federal system of government rests upon the variety of institutions; that variety of institutions consists of there being slavery in some of the States. If slavery disappeared, that variety would disappear; if that variety disappeared, our Federal system of government would disappear; if our Federal system of government disappeared, the safeguards of our liberties would be destroyed — consequently, if slavery disappeared, liberty would disappear also. [Loud laughter.]

Again, if all the States were free, there would be uniformity; but uniformity in local and domestic affairs would be destructive of personal liberty — that uniformity is prevented by the existence of slavery; consequently, the existence of slavery prevents the destruction of liberty; or, liberty cannot be preserved but by the preservation of slavery. [Shouts of laughter.]

What benefactors of humanity were those who introduced slavery into this land! for they furnished the ma-

terial out of which the necessary variety was made, without which our liberty cannot exist. If they had not done so, then all the States would be free ; if all the States were free there would be uniformity, and we would all be slaves! [Laughter.] What nonsense to abolish the slave trade! The more slaves, the more variety—the more variety, the more freedom. [Continued laughter.]

How we must pity the unfortunate nations that have no slavery among them! for they have no variety of institutions; and having no variety of institutions, they can have no liberty. Poor people that have no slaves among them! they can never be free. [Peals of laughter.]

It is a little surprising, however, that this great and luminous doctrine of "*variety*" should have been so little known about the time when our Government was organized, and the Constitution framed. There were two individuals living then who enjoyed some little reputation for statesmanship, one of whom said, "I trust we shall have a Confederacy of Free States;" and the other said, "Nothing is more certainly written in the book of fate, than that those people (meaning the slaves) are to be free." And they were called statesmen! What an immense progress we have made in these seventy years! They would be called simpletons or traitors now; for they either knew nothing of the great doctrine of "*variety*"—which was very foolish—or, if they knew it, they plotted the destruction of popular freedom by advocating uniformity—which certainly was very treasonable. By the way, the name of one was George Washington, and the name of the other Thomas Jefferson. [Bursts of laughter.] You will be obliged to confess that you were very much mistaken in those two men. What a pity Judge Douglas did not live in those days! How he would have knocked his great doctrine of *variety* about their ears! How he

would have taught Washington what the foundation of our Federal system is! How he would have told Jefferson what the great safeguards of liberty are! [Continued merriment.]

But, alas! statesmen like Douglas are sometimes born not only out of season, but also out of place. [Laughter.] What a pity Judge Douglas does not live in Switzerland, the oldest Republic now extant. Those benighted people, the Swiss, have been for centuries indulging in the foolish delusion that they were free, and that they had a Federal system of government. Why, there is no slavery in Switzerland—there is not the necessary variety of institutions there. Their States are all free States. There is uniformity there. How can they have Federal institutions with uniformity? How can there be liberty without variety? Impossible. Poor, innocent souls! they think they are free, and have no slaves! Let the Judge go at once on a missionary expedition to liberate the Swiss. He will have an opportunity to try that other great original idea of his, that “any political creed must be radically wrong which cannot be proclaimed everywhere.” I venture to predict that every honest Swiss boot will lift itself, and kick the great variety apostle respectfully from Alp to Alp. [Shouts of laughter.]

Now, look at the strange consequences into which his variety doctrine inevitably leads him. The necessity of preserving slavery for the sake of liberty—that is, of preserving the variety of institutions—was the principal ground upon which he placed the necessity of passing his conspiracy bill. The same man who tells us that slavery must be preserved because its extinction would bring about uniformity, which, in its turn, would produce a consolidated despotic Government—the same man advocates the passage of a measure investing the Government



with powers which put it upon the course of consolidation; for, without the grant of these powers, without that act of consolidation, slavery cannot be maintained. Slavery, according to him, must be preserved by a measure which is evidently dangerous to popular liberty; for, if slavery is not preserved, uniformity will ensue, and the liberties of the people will be in danger. In other words, he tells us that the existence of slavery is necessary for the preservation of our rights and liberties, and then he tells us that a measure undermining our rights and liberties is necessary for the preservation of slavery. The variety must be kept up for the purpose of maintaining our liberties, and our liberties must be put down for the purpose of keeping up the variety. [Loud laughter and applause.]

We are, indeed, greatly indebted to Judge Douglas. At last, we know what slavery is good for, and why its extinction is "neither possible nor desirable." Even the black man, in his sufferings, will find a soothing consolation in the Judge's philosophy. When Sambo is flogged down South, and the whip lacerates his back, the benevolent Judge will tell the poor fellow that he has got to be whipped for the sake of variety [laughter]; and Sambo will smile in the sweet consciousness of being whipped for a very great principle. [Renewed laughter.] And when the Judge's bill is passed, and he has opened for you the prison-cells wherein he blandly invites you "to drag out your miserable lives," you will with pride remember the old Roman proverb, "*Dulce et decorum est pro patria mori*;" and improving on the text, you will exclaim, "It is most sweet and honorable to die for variety's sake." [Laughter.]

This, then, is Judge Douglas's philosophy of government; not an idea incidentally dropped in a speech, but his great original conception. This shallow, ludicrous,

childish nonsense is what he emphatically proclaims to be the fundamental doctrine of his whole political wisdom! Oh, Douglas Democrats! how proud you must feel of your "greatest statesman alive!" Permit me to offer you, in the name of the Republican party, our sincerest congratulations. [Loud laughter and cheers.]

Gentlemen: You have accompanied my remarks with some evidences of merriment; and, indeed, it cannot be denied that there is some of the profundity of the illustrious Dogberry in Mr. Douglas's philosophical doctrines. But this is a serious matter. Do you not see that to some extent the honor of the country is involved in it? That gentleman stands before us as a candidate for the Presidency, and he is represented to be the "greatest American statesman." And now, I entreat you, I beseech you solemnly—for there is no man here who has the reputation of this country more deeply at heart than I have—I implore you, do not make this Republic ridiculous in the eyes of the whole world by attempting to crown that Dogberry statesmanship with the highest honors of the Republic. [Applause.]

I am not jesting; I am in deep and solemn earnest; for if you look over the list of those men, who, since the organization of the Republic, have been deemed worthy of a vote for the Presidency, you will find not one among them who has laid more insidious schemes to subvert the principles of the Constitution, who has done more to debauch the consciences of the people, more to bring American statesmanship into contempt, than he. [Applause.]

And, thus, here I stand before the great jury of the sovereign people, and bring my bill of indictment.

I arraign Douglas for having changed his position in regard to the Missouri restriction time and again, according to the interests of slavery.

I arraign him for having broken the plighted faith of the people by the repeal of the compromise of 1820.

I arraign him for having upheld the most atrocious violations of the ballot-box; for having trampled upon the most sacred rights of the people of Kansas, so long as the struggle between freedom and slavery was doubtful.

I arraign him for having committed a fraud upon the people by forging and adulterating the principle of popular sovereignty, and making it the machinery of slavery propagandism.

I arraign him for having deserted the cause of free Kansas, when the people, having complied with all reasonable conditions, applied for admission into the Union.

I arraign him for having repeatedly made the attempt to disturb the system of Constitutional checks and balances, by placing the war-making power in the hands of the President.

I arraign him for having attempted, by his conspiracy bill, a thing more outrageous than the sedition law of 1798, to put the liberties of speech and press at the mercy of a political inquisition, and to make judicial persecution for opinions' sake a permanent system of policy.

I arraign him, lastly, for having attempted to pass off upon the people a doctrine of political philosophy, which is an insult to the popular understanding. No, I beg your pardon, I do not arraign him for that, for this is a free country, where everybody has a right to make himself as ridiculous as he pleases, "subject only to the Constitution of the United States." [Loud laughter.] And, yet, I arraign him for that also, for I protest that he has no right to make the Republic ridiculous with himself. [Applause.]

Here is the charge. It is for the people to give the verdict.

Gentlemen, will you have patience enough to listen to

a few remarks about Douglas, "the Presidential candidate?" [Voices, "Go on."] Well, after these exploits, he thought he was fit to be a Democratic candidate for the Presidency [laughter] and so his name went before the Charleston Convention. But, wonderful to tell, the whole Southern Democracy seemed to have united against him; and I honestly declare I think the slave power did wrong. It might have found a more abject and less exacting tool, but it could hardly expect to find a more daring, reckless, and unscrupulous one. What was the reason of its opposition? Was it the constitutional quibbles about which they had been contending? The whole difference was merely imaginary. Was it that the slaveholders thought a man who betrayed his own section of the country could not be relied upon in his promises to be faithful to another? It was more honorable than judicious in the slave power to be governed by such a feeling. No, I think the true reason widely differs from this, and it shows that Mr. Douglas never had sagacity enough to understand his own position.

The slave power will sometimes, for expediency's sake, condescend to make a Northern man President, if he consents to be its unconditional tool, but it will never elevate one who aspires to be or become a leader of the party. Mr. Douglas ought to have understood that. There was his mistake. However willing he may have been to serve it, he had to serve it not in his, but in its own way. He affected independence, and he fell. I think the Southern leaders acted against their own interest, for in Judge Douglas they would have had a man in the Presidential chair who would have shrunk from nothing to regain their favor. It is my conviction that he would have been a more ultra pro-slavery President than Breckinridge, or Jefferson Davis, or Slidell, and I wish they would still conclude to take him, so as to place every man

in his proper position. You see we are not afraid of your combinations. [Applause.]

But the mistake was committed. They opposed him to the last, and Judge Douglas saw that his nomination in Charleston was an impossibility. Then his friends moved an adjournment of the Convention, and carried it. They were to reassemble at Baltimore, a few weeks afterward. In the mean time, Mr. Douglas saw a last chance of appeasing the South. He grasped at it with desperate eagerness; he saw the great prize slipping from his hands, and he staked his all upon a last cast. On the 15th and 16th of May he arose in the Senate, and, in one of the most elaborate efforts of his life, he made the following statement: and, Douglas Democrats, I claim your special attention. Listen: "It is part of the history of the country, that under this doctrine of non-intervention—this doctrine that you delight to call squatter sovereignty—the people of New Mexico have introduced and protected slavery in the whole of that Territory. Under this doctrine, they have converted a tract of free territory into slave territory more than five times the size of the State of New York. Under this doctrine, slavery has been extended not only up to  $36^{\circ} 30'$ , but up to  $38^{\circ}$ , giving you a degree and a half more of slave territory than you ever claimed. \* \* \* What square inch of free territory has been converted into slave territory on the American continent since the Revolution, except in New Mexico and Utah, under the principle of non-intervention affirmed at Charleston? If it be true that this principle of non-intervention has protected slavery in that comparatively northern and cold region, where you did not expect it to go, cannot you trust the same principle further South, when you come to acquire additional territory from Mexico? Will not the same principle protect slavery in the northern states of Mexico when they



are acquired, since they are now surrounded by slave territory?"

Oh, Douglas men, what a fall is this! Did you not tell us when the Nebraska Bill was enacted, that that law was the most efficient way of introducing free labor into the Territories? Have you not most solemnly assured us every day since 1854 that the principle of popular sovereignty, as expounded by Mr. Douglas, would most certainly save all the Territories from the grasp of slavery? And now look there! Your own master and prophet admits, acknowledges, **BOASTS** of it—that this same principle gave to slavery one and one-half degrees of latitude more than it had ever claimed, and that since the organization of the American Republic not a square foot of free territory was ever converted into slave territory, but by the same measure which you represented to us as the greatest and most reliable engine of free labor! [Cries of "Shame!"] Your own master and prophet tells you to your faces, and in the face of all mankind, and in the face of posterity, that you have been lying most atrociously—lying every day for the last six years. This was unkind—was it not, Douglasites of the North?

No; I am not joking. It was terribly unkind. All he said was most certainly, most undoubtedly, most uncontrovertibly true; but I declare, that if he had the least regard for the feelings of his friends—the least sympathy for them in their awkward embarrassments—he, *he* ought to have been the last man on earth to make that statement. Did he not know that you had supported him and made friends for him on the false pretence that his great principle worked the exclusion of slavery from the Territories? Did he not know that you had pledged your honor, had staked your character for truth and veracity, upon that pretence? He knew it well. He had encouraged you in doing so; and after you have compromised your-

selves for him, day after day, in the eyes of the whole world, he turns and most unceremoniously gives you the lie. Oh, that was ungenerous! It was mean—very mean—unspeakably mean. [Applause.] If your self-sacrificing friendship had awakened the least echo in his heart, he ought to have been the last man to do so. But that heart seems to be so filled with callous selfishness, so destitute of the generous impulses of human nature, that if his friends, like Broderick, die for him, he coldly disowns them [eries of "Shame!"]; and if they lie for him, he promptly puts them to shame! Disowns them and puts them to shame! And for what? For the purpose of retrieving the lost favor of the South; of regaining the lost smiles of the slave power! And to be sacrificed to them—was that the reward you had deserved at his hands!

Look at it again. See him stand before the slaveholders in the Senate of the United States, busy bargaining away your honor for their favor. "Who has ever served you more faithfully than I with my great principle?" he asks them. "Why not let my friends in the North preach up that principle as the pioneer of freedom? The fools, perhaps, themselves believe in what they say; but we know better. Do you not see the result? Why not permit me the innocent joke of bamboozling the people of the North into believing that I am the great champion of freedom." [Laughter.] Ah, Douglas men, what a sight is this? He has prostituted you, and now proclaims your disgrace. How do you like the attitude in which he has placed you? How do you like the pillory to which, with his own hand, he has nailed your ears?

And are you willing to stand there—stand there quietly in the eyes of mankind? Do you not sometimes hear an earnest voice speaking within you, speaking of a self-

respect and the natural dignity of man? Does it never tell you that the fieriest blush of shame would be an ornament to your cheeks? My friends, I love and esteem all that bears the attributes of human nature; but if sometimes, in an unguarded moment, a cloud of contempt arises in my soul, it is at the aspect of this gratuitous self-degradation, for which even ignorance and error can hardly serve as an excuse. [Great applause.]

See there your master and prophet, prostrating himself before the slave power—in the dust before your proud opponents! You can no longer say you stand by him, for since that day he does not stand up himself. If you are with him still—there, at the foot of the slave power, where he lies, you lie with him. And what did the slaveholders do after he had so meanly humiliated himself, and prostituted his friends? Did they smile upon him? Aye, they did, with scorn, and said, “We loved thy treason well enough, but we spurn with contempt the traitor” [applause]; and there he lies still.

The time of the Baltimore Convention arrived, and the struggle recommenced. It became at once manifest that Douglas’s nomination could not be forced upon the Democratic party without splitting that organization in twain; and he saw clearly enough that his election would be an impossibility. The South was seceding *en masse*, and leaving the Rump Convention to do as it pleased. Then Mr. Douglas, seeing a disgraceful defeat inevitable, wrote a letter to his friends in the Convention, requesting them to withdraw his name if they found it in any way consistent to do so. And I declare, if Douglas was ever honest in anything he did or said, I believe he was honest then and there.

But now the moment had arrived when it became manifest that there is justice in history. [Applause.] Douglas’s position was disgusting, but his punishment was

sublime. Then his friends for the first time refused to obey his command. Those whom he had used so often and so long for his own advancement, saw now there was a last chance of using him for theirs. They said to him: "We have performed our part of the contract; now you have to perform yours. We have nominated you for the Presidency; now you have to permit us to be elected Congressmen, sheriffs, county clerks, or constables, on the strength of your name. There is no backing out. Ho! for the spoils! 'Dost thou think because thou hast suddenly become virtuous there shall be no more cakes and ale? Yes, by St. Ann! and ginger hot in the mouth, too!'" [Prolonged laughter.]

And so the saddle of the rump nomination is put upon his back, and the whole ghastly pack of office-hunters jump upon it. The spurs are put to the flanks, the whip applied to the back of the panting, bleeding jade, and so the spectral ride goes, east and west, night and day—may the steed go to perdition, if only the riders reach their goal. [Loud applause and cheers.]

Oh! there is justice in history. He has it at last, the idol of his dreams—the object of his fondest wishes; for which he has laid so many a treacherous scheme; for which he has turned so many a summersault; for which he has struck so many a blow at the peace of the Republic; for which he has so often prostituted himself and his followers; for which he has hugged so many a loafer, and insulted so many an honest man; for which he has made every rum-shop his head-quarters, and every ruffian his friend—he has it at last, the nomination for the Presidency; but what he has craved as a blessing, has come down upon him as a curse! To be nominated, and to know that an election is impossible! to be voted for, and to know that every vote for him is for Breckinridge or Lane, whom he hates [applause], and every vote against

him a vote for Lincoln, whom he does not love! [Renewed applause.] To be worked for, and be aware that those who do the work, work not for him, but for themselves! To be dead, and yet alive enough to be conscious of death! [Loud cheers.]

Oh, there is justice in history! Am I exaggerating? Where is that mighty leader, whose voice once called millions into the field? At the street-corners and cross-roads you see him standing like a blind, downfallen Belisarius—not in virtue, but in poverty—a bevy of political harlots surrounding him, and begging with him for the miserable obolus of a vote; begging the Know-Nothings, whom he once affected to despise; begging the Whigs, whom he once insulted with his brawling denunciations; invoking the spirit of Henry Clay, whom he once called a black-hearted traitor. [Cries of “Shame.”] Oh, poor Belisarius! The party harlots that surround him with their clamorous begging cry, steal every vote they receive for him and put it into their own pockets. [Applause.]

Where is the bold, powerful agitator, whose voice once sounded so defiantly on every contested field? Behold him on his sentimental journey [laughter], vainly trying to find his mother’s home and his father’s grave; apologizing with squeamish affectation for his uncalled for and indecent appearance in public, like one of the condemned spirits you read of in the myths of bygone ages, restlessly perambulating the world [laughter], condemned to a more terrible punishment than Tantalus, who was tortured by an unearthly thirst, with grapes and water within his reach; more terrible than that of the Danaides, who had to pour water into the leaky cask; for he is condemned to deliver that old speech of his over and over again [applause and cheers and laughter], as often as he arrives at a hotel that has a balcony [laugh-



ter], as often as his hasty journey is arrested by a spontaneous gathering. And when you hear a subterranean, spectral voice cry out, "my great principle—non-intervention!" that is the dead squatter sovereign atoning for the evil deeds he committed in his bodily existence. [Prolonged laughter and cheer.] Not long ago he haunted the railroad crossings and clambakes of New England; then the cotton-fields of the South—the ghostly apparition was last seen in this neighborhood.\* [Prolonged laughter and cheers.]

Where is that formidable party tyrant whose wishes once were commands; who broke down sacred compromises with a mere stroke of his finger; whose very nod made the heads of those who displeased him fly into the basket; whose very whims were tests of Democracy? Where is he who once, like Macbeth, thought himself invulnerable by any man "who was of woman born;" invincible,

—"Until

Great Birnam Wood to high Dunsinane hill  
Should come against him."

Like Macbeth, he has believed the fiends

"That paltered with him in a double sense,"

and there he stands, tied to the stake of his nomination.

"He cannot fly,

And, bear-like, must he fight his course." [Laughter.]

But as Birnam Wood marched to Dunsinane, so the very fence-rails of Illinois are rushing down upon him [tremendous laughter and cheers], and, like Macduff, there rises against him the spirit of free labor, whose

\* Mr. Douglas had made a speech in New York a day or two previous.

children he has murdered; that is a champion "not of woman born." [Great cheering.] And now

"On, Macduff;

And damned be he who first cries hold — enough."

[Renewed laughter and cheers.] Oh, there is justice in history. [Cheers.]

The same betrayal of the free-labor cause—the Nebraska Bill, which was to be his stepping-stone to power—proved to be the abyss which engulfed his honor, his manhood, his strength and his hopes. And there are those who mean to reverse the judgment of history! Vain undertaking! That man is marked by the hand of eternal retribution. On his very front stands the fatal touch. Do not attempt to arrest the hand of Supreme justice. You cannot save him from his ruin. Why are you so anxious to share his disgrace? Leaders of the Douglas Democracy, what means your empty bravado of strength? You cannot deceive your opponents, why are you working so hard to deceive your friends? [Applause:] You know that your orators are but endeavoring to galvanize a dead body into artificial life. You are well aware that your mass meetings and demonstrations are nothing but huge galvanic batteries at play. [Laughter.] What means your desperate attempt to glue your broken fortunes together with those of other parties? Do you think this is the way to cheat destiny out of its dues? Is it your ambition to have your descendants read in the history of our days: there were men living in 1860 with instincts so depraved, that when they could not accomplish that which was evil, they endeavored at least to prevent that which was good? [Applause.]

And you who are warned by the secret voice of conscience that you are doing wrong in adhering to Douglas,

and yet obey the command of party, hear me: Is party drill and discipline so omnipotent an idol that you would sacrifice upon its altar your independence, your manhood, and all that constitutes your moral worth?

And you who claim the exclusive privilege of swearing by the "Constitution and the laws," will you stamp the evidence of hypocrisy upon your brows by indirectly endorsing him who has done more than any other living man to undermine the Constitution and pervert the laws? Will you permit your political hucksters to barter away not only your votes, but your consciences and your honor?

But let the conspirators come on: we defy them. [Tremendous cheering.] Go on with your coalitions, which are made on the distinct understanding that those who unite to-day are to cheat each other to-morrow. [Applause.] Has it become a ruling principle in your parties, that the "rank and file have no rights which the leaders are bound to respect?" [Laughter.] You will find out your mistake. Look around you. Do you see the thousands leaving your banners, unwilling to submit to your treacherous scheme to rob the people of their election? Do you know what that means? It means that the man rises above the partisan. It means the revival of conscience in our politics. It is the true sovereignty of the people vindicating itself. [Cheers.]

Now, build up your mole-hills, and call them impregnable fortresses. It seems you do not know how small they are. The logic of things will roll its massive wheel over them, and your puny contrivances will leave no trace behind to tell your doleful story. [Applause.]

Sir, only those whose hearts are unmoved by great moral impulses can fail to see that we are in the midst of a great moral revolution. They cannot prevent its

final victory; I firmly believe they cannot even retard it. No; they are aiding it in spite of themselves; for their general rottenness demonstrates its necessity. [Applause.] Douglas himself is powerfully promoting its progress. He has taught the people of America a great, sublime lesson.

I think it was Senator Pugh who once said that if Douglas were struck down by the South, he would take his bleeding corpse and show it to the youth of the Northwest as an example of Southern gratitude. Let that modern Mark Antony come on with his dead Cæsar (pardon me, it is neither Cæsar dead nor Mark Antony alive,) [applause and laughter]; let him bring on his bleeding corpse, and I will suggest his funeral oration. Let him say to the youth of the American Republic: "This is Douglas. Look at him. For every wound the South inflicted upon him, he has struck a blow at the liberties of his countrymen. Let him serve as a warning example, that a man may be a traitor to liberty, and not become a favorite of the slave power. Mark him! By false popular sovereignty he tried to elevate himself; and true popular sovereignty strikes him down." [Loud applause.]

If the youth of America profit by this lesson, then it may be said that even Douglas has done some service to his country. [Great applause.] Then, peace be with him — his mission is fulfilled.

But now we have to fulfil ours. False popular sovereignty is down. Freemen, it is for you to see to it, that true popular sovereignty triumph. [Applause.]

Citizens of New York, when, after the adjournment of the Convention which nominated that great and good man, Abraham Lincoln, for the Presidency [cheers for Lincoln], I addressed the people of my State again for the first time, I said to them: "Let Wisconsin stretch

her hand across the great lakes and grasp the hand of New York. Let it be known that New York and Wisconsin, who stood together to the last for Seward [prolonged cheers] in the Convention, will stand first and foremost in the battle for Lincoln and Liberty." [Renewed cheers.] Wisconsin will redeem her pledge on the 6th of November. Men of New York, we look to you for a response. [Immense cheering and waving of hats.]



## VIII.

### FREE SPEECH.

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ADDRESS DELIVERED AT TREMONT TEMPLE, BOSTON,  
ON THE 11<sup>TH</sup> OF DECEMBER, 1860.

*This address was delivered in the regular course of the Fraternity Lectures. A few days before its delivery a meeting of Abolitionists was broken up in Boston by an excited crowd, among whom, as the papers stated, several of the "respectable conservative citizens and business men of Boston" were conspicuous. The secession movement in the Southern States had assumed formidable proportions, and great apprehensions were entertained by commercial men and manufacturers, who had large pecuniary interests at stake in the insurgent States. Their fears and excitement were increased by every demonstration in the North which might have a tendency to "irritate the South." The same cause produced similar disturbances in other Northern cities, until at last the great national uprising after the attack on Fort Sumter put an end to such proceedings.*

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:—

A few days ago, when on my travels in the State of New York, I was reading newspapers in a railroad car, my eyes lighted upon a column headed in large letters: "The mouth of Abolitionism shut! The Blacks smoked out!" &c., and then followed a glowing account of the ardor and enthusiasm displayed by the intelligent and conservative citizens of Boston in breaking up a meeting of Abolitionists. At first I thought there must be some mistake; it must be an old paper, or an article copied from an old paper; or it must be a typographical error, substituting Boston for Baltimore, or Louisville, or some

other place exposed to the Southern breeze — but sure enough, all the particulars coincided, it was Boston, the great commercial and intellectual metropolis of the great and enlightened State of Massachusetts. I need hardly add that the paper which expressed so high satisfaction at an attempt to put down freedom of speech, had in the late campaign advocated the interests of Stephen A. Douglas, somewhat mixed up with those of Mr. Bell, and of the representative of American culture and refinement, Edward Everett. [Sensation.]

I must confess that the reading of that account filled my heart with sadness; not as though I had expected much good to arise from the meeting that was disturbed; for it was no doubt superfluous to discuss in Boston, the question how slavery can be abolished, at a time when the people of the Cotton States are so busily engaged in the material solution of that interesting problem; nor as though I had sympathized with the peculiar views to which that meeting was likely to give a public expression; for, as long as our fundamental laws are such as to keep the road of progressive improvement open, I shall always be opposed to every attempt to seek that progress outside of the laws; but the reading of that account made me sad, because it destroyed a delusion I had fondly indulged in. It was the delusion that in a city which surrounded the Cradle of American Liberty, which had listened to the most eloquent appeals in favor of human rights, and in which the most progressive features of American civilization are most successfully cultivated, that in such a city, I say, every educated man would appreciate the great agencies of progress and social order, to which we owe our moral and intellectual development and prosperity and power among the nations of the world. Indeed, of all countries on the globe, Massachusetts, and of all cities inhabited by civilized beings, Boston ought to

be the first to understand that free speech is not only the great propelling power of progress, but also the great bulwark of peace and security. [Hearty applause.]

Is it necessary that in the heart of New England I should spend my voice in illustrating the idea that the freedom of speech is the great agency of human progress? A year ago, on a November day, I went from Albany by Worcester to Providence. Nature was stripped of its autumnal beauty, and the frosty breath of winter had clad your hills and valleys in monotonous grey. And yet the landscape was far from leaving a dreary and melancholy impression upon the mind. For wherever the eye turned, there were the cheerful evidences of human ingenuity, of successful labor, of thoughtful enterprise. Here busy waterfalls, surrounded with the stirring bustle of manufacture, there the neat farm-house on the small patch of arable ground between the hills, there clusters of dwellings and tidy villages bespeaking general thrift and contentment, all following upon each other in rapid succession — everywhere dead nature enlivened with human thought translated into living action. We left Worcester in the dusk of the evening; the air was chilly, the sky dark, and the prospect of the trip unpleasant. But hardly was the railroad station behind us, when I saw a sight, the recollection of which will never leave my memory. On the right and left a grand and almost continuous illumination; factory after factory far and near, with thousands of windows brilliantly shining, as though hundreds of Christmas trees were burning within. I have seen the capitals of the old world illuminated, when the masters of kingdoms and empires tried to honor themselves in honoring each other; artificial suns baffling the moonlight, thousands of rockets mocking the stars; but of all the splendor I could recall to my memory, none equalled that endless sea of light which in the barren

nooks of your rocky country shone from the windows of your factories, reflected by quiet mill-ponds and flickering cascades. In the capitals of Europe I had seen the people gathering around those splendid exhibitions of royal pomp and giving vent to official enthusiasm ; I had heard them shout "Long live King so-and-so!" and the enthusiasm died away with the fire-works. But here also, on that day and evening, I witnessed a popular demonstration, not of the noisy and official kind, nor passing away like the light of a Roman candle. As we went along from station to station, men and women, young and old, passed out and in ; all well-behaved and of pleasant address, the evidence of intelligence and cheerful contentment on every face. I listened to their conversations as the train went on ; some engaged in a jovial talk about small home affairs, others absorbed in grave discussion about church and state, and labor and pay, and books and lectures, and all political and social problems imaginable. There I heard thoughts expressed and opinions uttered by men whose hands showed the traces of hard manual labor, thoughts and opinions set forth in logical reasoning, which would have puzzled the philosophers of the old world and made the faces of despots turn pale ; and these thoughts and opinions weighed and modified in the current of occasional but earnest discussion, brought forward with a calmness and self-reliance, as though the men who uttered them had been unaware that in almost any other country of the world their utterances would have shaken the political edifice to its very foundation.

But here we went on quietly and undisturbed through the brilliantly lighted valley, and the conviction impressed me profoundly that these calm and earnest conversations were also an homage paid to a sovereign—but to the all-powerful sovereign of this country, the *freedom of inquiry*. In honor of this sovereign the thousands of windows were

gorgeously illuminated, in his honor burned in every human brain around me the inextinguishable light of free thought, shining out in full utterance. [Applause.]

It was a grand spectacle—grand in its simplicity; grander still for the fact that it was the regular exhibition of every day life. This shows, on a small scale, the whole tendency of New England life. Here, then, is a great exchange market of ideas, where every man, whose brain is active, offers the thoughts he has conceived for the thoughts that have sprung up in the brains of others, on every subject within the circle of his interests, on every problem within the reach of the human understanding; every idea weighed as to its value with scrutinizing curiosity; what is wrong and dangerous, condemned; what is valueless, thrown aside; what is good and useful, accepted; but nothing condemned, nothing thrown aside, nothing accepted, before it is tried in the high court of a free and enlightened public opinion.

There is, then, a people, where every man thinks and is fond of thinking, because his mental activity is stimulated by the thoughts of others; where every man gives utterance to his thoughts, and thereby modifies the thoughts of others; where every man receives from others, and elaborates within himself to new forms what he has received. This is the freedom of thought made fruitful by the freedom of speech.

What son of Massachusetts will deny that this uninterrupted, boundless, universal traffic of ideas, is the source of her rapid and universal intellectual and material progress? Who will pretend that limits could be set to the freedom of utterance, without crippling the productive power of the freedom of thought?

But let us give the arguments of those who, from time to time, see fit to put down free speech, a candid and serious consideration. You tell me that there are certain



social and political problems, the free discussion of which would endanger certain interests, and make certain men very angry. Oh, no doubt of that. Free discussion has always been a very uneasy thing to those who were wrong, and knew it; and, if they had been permitted to rule the world, the human species would, by this time, have become as mute as the species codfish, and but little more intelligent. But you may tell me that, at certain times, and under certain circumstances, more than ordinary discretion and forbearance are required, and that by an inconsiderate use of the freedom of speech, dangers and complications might be brought about, which it would be better to avoid. Undoubtedly; I am of the same opinion. I, too, think that moderation enhances the efficiency of firmness.

But while I am willing to admit that, under certain circumstances, discretion may be the better part of valor, there are other people who do not think so. And if they make an indiscreet use of their right to think and speak as they please, much as we may disapprove of it, shall we try to obviate the inconvenience that may possibly arise from their indiscretion, by depriving them of their rights? Do you not see that a limitation of the freedom of speech will create much greater dangers than those arising from an indiscreet use of it?

I will explain myself. Imagine the chief-of-police of Austria or France travelling on our railroads, listening to the conversations of people around him, visiting our lectures and political meetings, reading the newspapers and pamphlets with which the country is flooded every day; he will exclaim: "How is it possible that an orderly and well regulated government can exist where everybody is permitted to utter such revolutionary and inflammatory sentiments?" And his astonishment will increase when you tell him that where the freedom of speech and

the press are most scrupulously respected, there is the least danger of trouble and disorder in the State. He will, perhaps, at first, not understand this.

But you ask him: "How do you maintain law and order at home?" And he will reply: "By suppressing the expression of opinions which run against the ruling system of government." "Is the order which you maintain, by such means, never endangered and interrupted?" "Yes, it is from time to time. In Russia the nobility and officers of the army are in the habit of forming conspiracies, and killing off an Emperor, now and then. In France we have our revolutionary outbreaks at almost regular periods. A few thousand people are slaughtered, kings driven away, governments broken up, and the confusion is general." "And what opinions are entertained by those who form the conspiracies in Russia, or who make the revolutions in France?" "Just those the expression of which the government has seen fit to suppress, and, I am astonished to see, they are very much like those which I find here in every newspaper and in everybody's mouth."

That is what the good chief-of-police does not understand; and yet, nothing is plainer.

Here is a man who is blessed with an active brain. His mind conceives an idea which becomes dear to his heart, because he is profoundly convinced of its justness and rectitude. He sees things in actual life which run contrary to his conviction of right, and the idea he harbors in his soul struggles for utterance. But when he attempts to lay before the conscience of his neighbors the sentiments he cherishes in his heart, he is told: "Thou shalt not speak." His soul retracts within itself, and as he scrutinizes his own thoughts, he becomes more and more convinced that he is right. The secret activity of his mind tortures him; what lives in him will out, but again

and again he encounters the arbitrary veto : "Thou shalt not speak!" Thus his inner life is pent up in his breast ; it longs for air which is forbidden it ; it is pent up like the steam in an overcharged boiler, which, the more it is compressed, the more it approaches a violent and destructive explosion ; and at last he cries out : "Let me speak, or I will fight!" Thus the peaceful devotee of an idea has become a rebel against the existing order. I have not described an individual only, but nations.

Possibly, this idea, which thus forces itself into violent utterance, is wrong and impracticable. Would it not have corrected and modified itself, if it had been permitted to come into free and open contact with other ideas on the open forum of political or social life ? Or if it was right, would it not, without causing any violent and destructive commotions, gradually have modified the ruling order of things, by the peaceable working of public opinion ? But attempt to prohibit its expression, and pen it up within the breasts of men, and it will come out, not as a gentle and reasoning appeal to the popular understanding, but as a passionate outbreak ; carrying with it the encouraging consciousness of doing right, at the same time the vindictive consciousness of suffered wrong.

They speak of suppressing the discussion of the slavery question. No doubt that agitation has given rise to many mistaken ideas, to many aberrations of judgment ; so has the discussion of the tariff question, and that of the Homestead Bill. But suppress the freedom of utterance, force the convictions and feelings of men back into their hearts, prohibit their meetings, destroy their newspaper presses, suppose it were possible that you succeeded in all this, and what will you gain ? What is now spoken out in broad daylight, open to the judgment of all and to the criticism of public opinion, will then be discussed in secret conventicles, and those who now are satisfied with

speaking or listening, will then, no longer controlled by public opinion, feel an irresistible desire to act. You may now hear strange speeches, but then you would see stranger enterprises. The anti-slavery sentiment, which now is speaking, listens also to what others may have to say. Make it dumb, and you will make it, at the same time, deaf. Do you not know, that with those who are deaf and dumb it is difficult to reason? If you want a man to hear you, give him also permission to speak. You are afraid of fanaticism! You can watch and counteract fanaticism that works itself out in speaking. But impose silence upon it, and it will most surely find a secret field of operation, where it will elude your eye, and baffle your efforts to control it. You are afraid of demagogism and political intrigue! Bring demagogism to the test of free discussion, and it will soon unmask itself, and intrigue has lost its life-element, when in the open light of day argument struggles with argument.

But you may say that fanaticism and demagogism, if armed with the power of speech, may pervert the popular mind, and in appealing to the passions or the imagination of the multitude mislead their reason. I remember the time when, previous to the great outbreak in 1848, the first symptoms of an approaching change became perceptible. A rigid censorship muzzled the press; stringent police regulations rendered open discussion of political matters impossible; but a secret literature had sprung up, little volumes, often copied in manuscript, went from hand to hand, and from time to time we would hear of a liberal speech delivered by men a little more daring than others. The strangest doctrines of political and social organization were thus propagated, and the most adventurous plans of future action seriously formed and entertained. All those who felt sensible of the pressure of an absolute government, grasped at this forbidden fruit with morbid

avidity. Sense and nonsense were taken in promiscuously by all those who had not accustomed themselves to a regular mental discipline; everything oppositional, however extreme or strange, was secretly but fervidly applauded, because everything that resisted the pressure from above seemed to cheer and relieve the minds of the people.

At last the outbreak came. The people breathed, the weight that had borne them down was shaken off, men were free. And now all the crude ideas that had been fostered in secret broke forth in prodigious confusion. The press, suddenly relieved of the censorship, poured out an avalanche of political doctrines. Hundreds of speakers enlivened the popular assemblies. Writing and speaking everywhere, and yet no two men seemed to understand each other. Most of them certainly did not understand themselves. That was a moment when fanaticism or demagogism, armed with extraordinary powers of speech, might have yielded a terrible power, not as though free speech itself were a danger to society, but because the people had been deprived so long of the instruction and discipline which free speech brings with it; because the people, for the first time charmed with the music of pathetic language, were apt to believe that everything that sounded well was right, and that everything that pleased their imagination was reasonable.

But where the people have passed through a long school of political experience, where all classes of society group themselves near a certain line of average in regard to education, where the freedom of speech is no novelty but an old established institution, there the people are apt to discriminate. Where public meetings are a matter of daily occurrence, there the orators learn how to speak, but the auditors learn also how to listen. Where speech is not free, there people are apt to swallow the unjustly



forbidden fruit unexamined. But we are inclined to become rather fastidious at a dinner-table to which we sit down every day.

I may boast of some little experience in this matter. A good joke may draw a laugh, a pretty figure or brilliant illustration may bring down a house, a pathetic appeal to the tender sympathies of human nature may draw tears from the eyes of an audience—but in this country it requires a strong array of facts and solid argument to change their convictions. Mere eloquence may tickle their senses and move their hearts, but mere eloquence is not sufficient to reach their minds—for their minds are not always accessible even through their hearts. Thus the dangers connected with the freedom of speech decrease in the same measure as it is more extensively exercised. The seductive powers of eloquence grow less, the more the people expose themselves to the seduction.

The people of this country ought certainly to be the last to speak of the dangerous influence of eloquence, for their history is full of examples which show that the highest oratory cannot move the popular mind from the ground of strong moral convictions. Eloquence has not seldom been more dangerous to those who possessed it, than to those upon whom it was destined to operate. New England had a favorite son, whose massive eloquence had more than once thrilled the heart of the nation. New England had been true to him as long as he was true to her. But once, on the 7th day of March, 1850, he spoke again, spoke with all that power which none but he possessed, spoke for a cause which the conscience of New England condemned—spoke himself to death—but the conscience of New England still lives. [Applause.]

If the greatest efforts of the thunderer of Massachusetts could not shake the moral convictions of the people, what chance have those who with the strength of their

voices try to make up for the failing strength of their cause? There is not, and perhaps there never was, a man in this country, who has addressed as great a number of his countrymen as Mr. Douglas; and I venture to say there hardly ever was a man who with greater dexterity and perseverance used the watchwords of liberty in the advocacy of slavery. And yet it does not appear that his prodigiously meandering electioneering journeys [laughter and applause] made many converts for his cause. Malicious people even go so far as to pretend that he would have received more votes if fewer people had heard his eloquent voice. [Applause.]

But examples still more striking are crowding upon my memory. It is said that the eloquent Caleb Cushing\* is laboriously engaged in the delivery of a speech, which he commenced at a time out of men's memory, and which he means to continue to a time out of men's endurance [continued laughter]; a speech in which he has proved, is proving, and will still further prove, that the people of the North have speedily to abandon the principles contained in the Republican platform, or this young and hopeful Republic will sink to the bottom of the unfathomable ocean, never to rise again. And yet I am informed that the moral convictions of the people are successfully enduring this most unearthly of trials. The *New York Tribune* even asserts that this speech has created a panic in the good town of Newburyport, and that the citizens are rapidly moving their families to Plum Island [laughter], in order to escape the infliction, thus rather abandoning their old and dear firesides than yielding their consciences to Caleb Cushing's oratory. This, however, I do not believe. I think the report is exaggerated. For, although

\* Mr. Caleb Cushing was engaged in delivering a speech on the State of the Country to the people of Newburyport, which he continued night after night.

Caleb Cushing's speech may not be attractive enough to hold them, it is probably not propelling enough to drive them away. [More laughter.]

Is any further proof required, that a people who are educated in the great school of public life, are proof against the seductive power of eloquence? That they are moved by ideas, and not by the verbiage of sounding appeals? That it is a conscientious conviction that governs them, and not the charm of glowing periods? [Applause.]

And now suppose the meeting, which those refined and patriotic gentlemen of this neighborhood saw fit to break up—suppose it had resulted in the expression of the sentiment, that slavery could be abolished in no better way than by invading the Southern States and liberating the negroes by force of arms—suppose this proposition had been ever so publicly discussed, had been set forth in language ever so glowing and brilliant, had been urged upon you in appeals ever so warm and touching, do you think that a single individual within the reach of its influence, would have promptly resolved to shoulder his musket, to march into the South, and to undertake the terrible business? Do you not think if it had ever been seriously entertained, the same freedom of speech, which brought it forth, would have subjected it to a rigorous criticism, and would have worked its abandonment?

You may remind me of John Brown. Ah, it was not in consequence of rights and liberties safely enjoyed, but of oppression ignominiously suffered, that he entered upon his fatal career. It was not in the free and serene atmosphere of public discussion, but in the dark secrecy of a despairing heart that he conceived his terrible design. [Sensation.]

Nor do I think that those who disturbed the meeting of Abolitionists had any such fears. They deemed it

necessary to satisfy their Southern customers of their loyalty, so that trade might not suffer. They had to demonstrate that State street is not disposed to invade Virginia or South Carolina, all of which was very right and proper. Everybody has a right to do that, and if they can persuade the South that Boston is not altogether an anti-slavery city let them do so.

But is it necessary for that purpose that they should put down the freedom of speech? Why not by free speech counteract the mischief that free speech threatened to accomplish? Why not call a meeting on their side, a "tremendous outpouring of the conservative masses," in Faneuil Hall? Have they no orators on their side, whose voice will not reach farther than that of Fred. Douglas? and drown that of Wendell Phillips? [Voice in the audience, "No."] Mr. Everett would certainly be found ready to make another Constitutional-Union speech in continuance of the late Presidential campaign. He would describe the horrors of the slave insurrection in St. Domingo to draw tears from your eyes; he would invoke the spirits of Washington, Jefferson and Madison, generously forgetting that these three great Virginians were anti-slavery men, and if he should not succeed in demonstrating your loyalty to the dullest mind in the South, what have you to hope for? Is a loafer's oath better than Everett's periods? Are brickbats more demonstrative than Mr. Everett's appeals? [Loud applause.]

Ah, yes, it seems, indeed, to be considered so. The "intelligent and conservative citizens of Boston" have learned a lesson, and, remarkable enough, have not forgotten it. Last winter a Conservative Union meeting was held in Faneuil Hall. It was a great success. I stood among the assembled multitude and listened to the speeches. The speeches were good. Ex-Mayor Lincoln spoke, Mr. Everett spoke, and Caleb Cushing spoke. Mr.

Lincoln's speech was replete with patriotism, rather liberal; Mr. Everett's with patriotism, somewhat timid; Mr. Cushing's with patriotism, quite vindictive. He indulged in the pious wish that the Abolitionists should be hung, and when I heard that, I thought that the most fastidious Southern appetite ought to be satisfied. But lo! behold! Southern gentlemen made remarks in Congress about the Union meeting in Boston, and kicked and abused Mr. Lincoln for having made an anti-slavery Union speech, and abused and kicked Mr. Everett for not having made a pro-slavery Union speech, and abused and kicked even the indomitably faithful Caleb for having complimented Mr. Lincoln, who had made an anti-slavery Union speech. [Applause and laughter.]

This result was very unsatisfactory; it was hard. No wonder they have, at last, come to the conclusion that they cannot demonstrate their loyalty to the South successfully, unless they do it *in the Southern way*. The breaking up of a meeting of Abolitionists was decidedly better, and showed a certain progressive spirit; but it was by no means *the thing*. *The thing* would have been to tar and feather James Redpath, to hang Wendell Phillips, and to burn Fred. Douglas alive. That would have been a sign of loyalty worth a gracious acknowledgment. [Sensation.] But nothing short of that will answer, and although they certainly have done better than last winter, yet I fear the demand is running ahead of the supply, and love's labors are lost again. Are they afraid to go to such extremes? Ah, why then go in that direction at all, if only by such extremes the desired result can be obtained? It is humiliating to degrade one's-self; but is it not still more humiliating to degrade one's-self in vain? [Loud applause.]

But consider calmly, where we are drifting, if every monetary panic may furnish an excuse for subverting the



fundamental liberties of the citizen? If every material interest that considers itself endangered may insist upon overthrowing constitutional rights? If every whim of an influential class of society may pass as a sufficient pretext for undermining the very foundations upon which the successful development of our government rests?

When I look upon this spectacle, there is one thought which presses itself irresistibly upon my mind. This nation has undertaken to be the great guiding star of mankind, and to show the people of the earth how man can be free if left to himself. Thus, this Republic does not belong to herself alone. The human race has its stake in the enterprise. If liberty falls here, where can we expect to see it maintained? If man does not respect his neighbor's rights here, where he has tasted their enjoyment, how can he respect them where he is ignorant of their blessings? If the people cannot preserve the harmony of human rights, where they, free of outward pressure and independent of a foreign will, belong to themselves, how can they be expected to *create* that harmony, where their feet are clogged, and their hands are tied by institutions and laws and customs not of their own making, and their movements are embarrassed by the cumbersome traditions of past centuries?

And now there are millions of men living in the Old World, watching the development of things in this Republic with anxious solicitude, fondly hoping for the final solution of the great problem, applauding with exultant joy every success we achieve, deploring with heartfelt grief every reverse we suffer, for our victories, as well as our defeats, are theirs also — and whenever I hear, in this Republic, of individual rights invaded, of liberties threatened, and of the great agencies of progress disturbed, I cannot help asking myself: What will they think? What will they think, who expect to hear from

our shores the divine message that man is capable of governing himself, and, being free, capable of respecting the freedom of others? To them another spark of light extinguished, another ray of hope obscured, another bond of sympathy severed.

Indeed, those whose eyes were hopefully fixed upon this land, have already had to reconcile themselves to many a contradiction. Slavery existing in a portion of this Republic of equal rights, and all the despotism that grows out of slavery. But where slavery does not exist, there, at least, they supposed, would liberty throw her shield over every natural right of man. And now they have to learn that even here "freedom of speech" means, that every man has a right to say what is not too unpleasant to others. [Applause.] They will remember that there never was a despot on earth who refused to tolerate opinions which exactly agreed with his own. What will they think?

I must be pardoned, if, in my public addresses, I have not always been able to refrain from expressions of scorn and contempt; from applying the lash of invective and bitter denunciation to those who have disfigured the fair image of Liberty, which this Republic holds out to the world, and driven into despondency the millions of liberty-loving men in the world abroad who with all the tendrils of their souls clung to this last hope! I feel every pang of disappointment that distresses them vibrating in my heart, and so I ask again and again: "What will they think?" It is true, the time is out of joint; clashing interests and ideas are standing up against each other in formidable array; the minds of men are disturbed here by the pusillanimous frenzy of fear, there by the madness of a stubborn infatuation, and every day an untoward event may rouse the elementary forces of society to desperate conflicts. The passions of the multitude may be fiercer than

in ordinary times, bewildered by the perplexities which seem to beset our path. And believe me, I do not belong to those who think lightly of the dangers threatening the Republic. I have, like many of us, watched the development of our days with profound anxiety, weighing the stake which the universal cause of human liberty and civilization has in the momentous struggle, and seeking with a scrutinizing eye for a gleam of light in the confusion. Terrorism rules the hour in one part of the country; the light of reason seems to be extinguished by headlong passion, and the voice of counsel drowned by the clamor of infatuated zeal. In our midst peace is still reigning, not undisturbed, but not forever broken. Shall we follow their example? Is it better that here also the turbulent passions of the multitude should supplant a free and quiet exchange of opinions? If there is a light that may guide us in the storm, it is the protection of liberty extended to all, the rights of individuals mutually respected, and the freedom of opinion held inviolable. [Applause.] Then the freedom of thought, and the freedom of utterance, may issue from this crisis as it has done a thousand times; not only as the great agency of progress, but as the firmest bulwark of peace and order, as the great moderator of strife, as the great safety-valve of the social machinery. [Enthusiastic applause.]

## IX.

### RECONCILIATION BY EMANCIPATION.

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SPEECH DELIVERED AT THE COOPER INSTITUTE, NEW  
YORK, ON THE 6TH OF MARCH, 1863.

*The meeting before which this speech was delivered, was no party-meeting; it was called by a committee of gentlemen for the purpose of originating a vigorous popular movement in favor of the abolition of slavery by Congressional or Executive action. Although the war had been raging for nearly a year, the matter of slavery had been touched by the authorities only with the utmost caution, and slave property had been but little interfered with by our armies in the field. The military successes alluded to in the opening paragraphs of the speech, were the victories of Fort Donelson and Shiloh, which had created great enthusiasm in the loyal States.*

MR. PRESIDENT AND GENTLEMEN:—

I have not come here to plead the cause of a party, for in looking around me I become doubtful whether I belong to any; nor with a desire to gain the favor of those in power, for in this respect I have nothing to gain and much to lose; nor to flatter the multitude, for I know well that much of what I am going to say will expose me to acrimonious obloquy and vituperation. I mean to speak the truth as I understand it; I shall give you my own ideas, such as they are. I have travelled far to obtain this audience of the people—for your invitation encountered my desire—and shunned no inconvenience, sacrifice, or responsibility. So you may conclude that I am in

earnest. Of you I ask to lay aside to-night your party prejudices and passions; for this hour let your preconceived opinions be silent. I shall speak to you from the very depth of my profoundest convictions; listen to me as one sincere patriot will listen to another. [Cheering.]

Many of us will have to confess that the present state of things is contrary to our first anticipations. Eighteen months ago we did not expect that the people of the South would be so ready to rush into the suicidal course of open rebellion; nor did the people of the South, when they took the fatal step, expect that the people of the North would resist the treasonable attempt with so much determination and unanimity. In this respect the calculations of leading men on both sides have proved erroneous.\* But this lies behind us, and we have to deal with the nature and exigencies of the actual situation as it is. We are in open civil war. A numerous population, holding a very large portion of our country, is in arms against the government; the rebellion against the constitutionally established authorities is organized on the largest scale. The avowed aim and object is to disrupt the union of these States, and to secure for the people of some of them a separate national existence. The first steps taken in that direction were successful; a separate government, claiming to be independent of the Union, was established; it now defends itself with armed force against the lawful authorities of this Republic.

This is, in a few words, the actual situation of things. It presents us a twofold problem; first, to put down the rebels in arms, and then, to restore the Union. The first is a military problem, the second a political one. They are, in my opinion, so distinct from each other that I can well conceive how the first can be successfully solved, and how, at the same time, in attempting to solve the second,

\* See note to Chicago Speech, p. 29.



we can completely fail. As to the first, I will say but little. After serious disasters, and a long period spent in preparation, our brave armies have achieved great successes, which by some are considered finally decisive. I have heard it said that the war is practically ended. I must confess I am not of that opinion; but, although I might endeavor to show you that the rebels, however severely pressed at the present moment, have an immense country to fall back upon, in which their armies, even if they leave the Border States, may prolong the struggle for a considerable period; that difficulties of which at present we form no adequate idea await our victorious columns as they advance upon the soil of the enemy; that this prolongation of the war may bring great embarrassments upon us, financial distress, and, in case of a serious reverse to our arms, even difficulties with foreign powers, and that, in such an emergency, all the energy and patriotism which live in this American people will be put to the severest test—although I might show you all this, and warn you not to abandon yourselves too securely to deceitful illusions, yet I will drop this subject.

It would, perhaps, be useless, in this hour of triumph, to speak of apprehensions which, indeed, may and may not be justified by coming events. I am willing to suppose for the present, that fortune will smile upon us as constantly as many seem to anticipate, and that a speedy and complete military success will be gained, even if we confine ourselves strictly to the ordinary means of warfare. But the nearer we approach this end, the greater are the proportions to which rises before my mind the other problem which this very victory thrusts upon us. To a despotic government, the suppression of a rebellion and the re-establishment of the old order of things are one and the same. It sends its armies into the field, it beats the insurgents, disperses them, captures them,

forces them to lay down their arms: Now the military power of the rebellion is crushed, and the second part of the task begins, which consists in maintaining the authority so established. The despotic government prevents and suppresses the utterance of every adverse opinion; it executes or imprisons every refractory individual; it encounters by summary proceedings every hostile intention, and while establishing by a system of constant and energetic pressure a state of general and complete submission, it restores at the same time the condition of things originally existing before the rebellion broke out. It can do all this without changing its attributes in the least, for the means it uses for suppressing the rebellion, and afterward for crushing out the rebellious spirit, are in perfect consonance with the fundamental principles upon which its whole system of policy rests. It is the rule of absolute authority and force on one side, and absolute submission to this rule on the other. The same agencies which put down the rebellion, operate in maintaining the re-established authority, and all this in perfect keeping with the original nature of the whole political system.

But our case is widely different. Our system of government does not rest upon the submission of the people, but upon the free and independent co-operation of the individual. We have indeed a supreme authority, but this authority proceeds directly from the people, and works through the people. Our government may indeed suppress a rebellion by force; but, in order to restore the working of the original agencies upon which it rests, it is obliged to restore the individual to his original scope of self-action. If it attempted, after having suppressed a rebellion, to maintain its authority permanently by the same means by which it re-established it—that is to say, by a constant and energetic pressure of force—it would

not restore the old order of things but completely subvert its original basis; for the means by which it was obliged to suppress the rebellion are in direct contradiction to the fundamental principles of our government. In order to restore these principles to life, the government is obliged to trust its authority to the loyal action of the people. Therein is the embarrassment which a rebellion in a democratic republic will necessarily produce. What does it mean, the restoration of the Union? It means the restoration of individual liberty in all its parts, and of that ramification of political power in which self-government consists. If it meant anything else, if it meant the permanent holding in subjection of conquered provinces, if it meant the rule of force, if it meant the subversion of those principles of individual liberty which are the breath of our political life, would it then not be best to let the rebels go? Would it not be preferable to be content with the modest proportions to which the development of things has reduced us, to foster the principles and institutions which have made this people great and happy for so long a time with conscientious care, and to trust to the expansive power of liberty to restore this Republic in some more or less remote future to its former measure of greatness?

And yet, looking at things as they are, how can we expect to restore the Union but by the rule of force—that is to say, by a military occupation of the rebel States? But you will tell me that this will not last long. Well, and what will determine this period? The disappearance of the rebellious spirit; the return of sincere loyalty. But when and how will the rebellious spirit cease and loyalty return? True, if this rebellion were nothing but a mere momentary whim of the popular mind, if its causes could be obliterated by one of those sudden changes in popular opinion, which, in matters of minor importance, occur so

frequently with our impressible people, then a short military occupation might answer, and pass over without any serious effect upon our future development. But is it thus? Look the fact square in the face. This rebellion is not a mere momentary whim, and although but a few men seem to have prepared its outbreak, it is not the mere upshot of a limited conspiracy. It is a thing of long preparation; nay, more than that: it is a thing of logical development. This rebellion did not commence on the day that the secession flag was hoisted at Charleston; it commenced on the day when the slave power for the first time threatened to break up this Union. [Applause.]

Slavery had produced an organization of society strongly in contradistinction with the principles underlying our system of government — the absolute rule of a superior class, based upon the absolute subjection of the laboring population. This institution, continually struggling against the vital ideas of our political life, and incompatible with a free expression of public opinion, found itself placed in the alternative of absolutely ruling or perishing. Hence our long struggles, so often allayed by temporary expedients, but always renewed with increased acrimony. And as soon as the slave interest perceived that it could no longer rule inside of the Union, it attempted to cut loose and to exercise its undisputed sway outside of it. This was logical; and as long as the relation of interests and necessities remains the same, its logical consequences will remain the same also. This is not a matter of doctrine or party creed, but of history. Nobody can shut his eyes against so plain and palpable a fact. How is it possible to mistake the origin of this struggle? I ask you, in all sincerity, Would the rebellion have broken out if slavery had not existed? ["No, no, no."] Did the rebellion raise its head at any place where slavery did not exist? Did it not find sympathy and support wherever

slavery did exist? ["Yes, yes, yes."] Is anybody in arms against the Union but who desires to perpetuate slavery? What else is this rebellion but a new and logical form of the old struggle of the slave interest against the fundamental principles of our political system? Do not indulge in the delusion that you can put an end to this struggle by a mere victory in the field. By it you may quench the physical power of the slave interest, but you cannot stifle its aspirations. The slave interest was disloyal as long as it threatened the dissolution of the Union; it will be disloyal as long as it desires it. [Cheers.]

And when will it cease to desire it? It may for a time sullenly submit to the power of the Union, but it will not enter into harmonious co-operation with you, as long as it has aspirations of its own. But to give up its aspirations would be to give up its existence; it will therefore not cease to aspire until it ceases to live. [Applause.] Your President has said it once, and there is far-seeing wisdom in the expression: "This country will have no rest until slavery is put upon the course of ultimate extinction." [Great and continued applause.] But if the slave interest, as such, cannot return with cordial sincerity to its allegiance, where will the suppression of this rebellion lead us? Mark my words: Not only is the South in a state of rebellion, but the whole Union is in a state of revolution. This revolution will produce one of three things: either complete submission of the whole people to the despotic demands of the slave interest; or a radical change in our Federal institutions—that is to say, the establishment of a strong, consolidated Central Government; or such a reform of Southern society as will make loyalty to the Union its natural temper and disposition. [Cheers.] The old Union, as we have known it, is already gone; you cannot restore it; geographically, you may; but politically and morally, never. [Applause.] And if Jefferson



Davis should come to-morrow and give up his sword to President Lincoln, and all the rebel armies were captured in one day, and forced to do penance in sackcloth and ashes at the foot of Capitol Hill, the old Union would not be restored. [Cheers.] That circle of ideas in which the political transactions of the old Union moved is forever broken. [Sensation.] It cannot be restored. The mutual confidence on which the political transactions of the old Union rested has been discovered to be illusory; it is irretrievably gone. [Applause.]

I repeat, either you will submit to the South, or you will rule the South by the force of a strong Central Government, or Southern society must be so reformed that the Union can safely trust itself to its loyalty. Submit to the rebellious South! Submit after a victory! ["No, no, no."] You will tell me that this is impossible. Is it, indeed? There are those in the South who have fought and will fight the Union as long as the rebellion has a chance of success, who will apparently come over to our side as soon as our victory is decided, and who will then claim the right to control our policy. ["That's it."] And there are those in the North, who, either actuated by party spirit or misled by short-sightedness, stand ready to co-operate with the former. [Sensation.] The attempt will be made—whether it will succeed, who knows? But if it does succeed, it will lead to new struggles more acrimonious, dangerous and destructive in their nature, but also more radical and permanent in their result. [Cheers.]

The second possibility I indicated is the establishment of a strong, consolidated Central Government. Look at the course you have taken since the outbreak of the rebellion. It was natural that, when the necessity of vigorous action pressed upon us, the Government was clothed with extraordinary powers. As its duties and

responsibilities increased, its hands had to be strengthened. But it might, indeed, have been expected that the people as well as Government would treat with scrupulous respect those fundamental guarantees of our rights and liberties, the achievement or the preservation of which was so often in the history of the world bought at the price of bloody revolutions. Outside of this Republic, and, I have no doubt, inside of it also, it was remarked with some surprise, that the writ of habeas corpus, the liberty of the press, the authority of the civil courts of justice, were in some cases rather cavalierly dealt with. How easily it is forgotten that you cannot permit another's rights to be infringed without paving the way for a violation of your own! I do not mean to exaggerate the importance of these occurrences. I can well understand the violence of popular resentment, as well as the urgent necessities pressing upon those who stood at the helm. But I most earnestly warn you that a condition of things producing such necessities must not last too long, lest it create bad habits [applause]—the habit of disregarding these fundamental rights on one side, and the habit of permitting them to be violated on the other. In my opinion, the manner of treating its enemies is the true test of the tendency of a government. It may be questionable whether we can afford to suppress a rebellion in the same way and with the same means in and with which the King of Naples was in the habit of suppressing it; but it is certain that we can *not* afford to imitate him in his manner of *maintaining* the re-established authority of the Government. [Cheers.]

But now look at the task before you. I am willing to suppose that the rebel armies will be beaten and dispersed with greater ease and facility than I at present deem it possible. Then the *spirit* of disloyalty must be extinguished, the *source* of the mischief must be stopped. This

cannot be done by strategic movements and success in battle. How then is it to be done? Take the State of South Carolina: You beat the rebels defending its soil, and occupy the whole State with your troops. Armed resistance to the authority of the United States becomes impossible, but you want to restore the active co-operation of the people of South Carolina in the Government of the United States, without which the restoration of the old order of things is impossible. Now, you either call upon the people of South Carolina to elect new State authorities of their own, or you impose upon them a Provisional Government, appointed by the President at Washington. In the first case, the people of South Carolina—a large majority of whom are disloyal, and those who are not disloyal, are not loyal either [applause], and to a certain extent, seem to be incorrigible—are most likely to elect a new set of secessionists to office. It will be a re-organization of treason and conspiracy; for you must know that conspiracies do not only precede rebellions, but also follow unsuccessful ones. The new State Government is at once in conflict with the Federal authorities. The latter find themselves counteracted and clogged in every imaginable way; and after a series of unsuccessful attempts to secure a cordial and trustworthy co-operation, after a season of tiresome and fruitless wrangles, they find themselves obliged to resort to sterner measures; then, forcible suppression of every combination hostile to the Union; close surveillance of press and speech; martial law where the civil tribunals are found insufficient; in one word, a steady and energetic pressure of force, by which the Federal Government overrules and coerces the refractory State authorities. You will see at once, that if this pressure be not strong enough, it will not furnish the Government of the United States the necessary guarantees of peace and security;

and if it be strong enough to do that, it will not leave to the State Government that freedom of action upon which our whole political fabric is based.

Or, you follow the other course I indicated — institute provisional governments by appointment from the President, in a manner similar to that in which territories are organized. Then the General Government enters into immediate relation with the people of the rebellious district. While it leaves to the people the election of the Territorial Legislature, if I may call it so, it controls the action of that Legislature by the veto of the Executive and the rulings of the Judiciary in a regular and organic way. Thus mischief may be prevented, the execution of the laws secured, and the supremacy of the General Government maintained by the Government's own agents, until the States can be reorganized with safety to the Union. This plan may be preferable to the other, inasmuch as it will prevent the continuation of rebellious intrigues, and facilitate the repression and punishment of disloyal practices without a conflict with lawfully instituted authorities; but it is evident that such a condition of things cannot last long without essentially changing the nature of our general system of government. In either case, it will be the rule of force, modified by circumstances, ready to respect individual rights wherever submission is complete, and to overrule them wherever necessity may require it.

Do not say that these things are less dangerous because they are done with the assent of the majority; *for the assent of the people to a consolidation of power, is the first step toward subversion of liberty.* [Applause.] But is, indeed, this Government, in struggling against rebellion, in re-establishing its authority, reduced to a policy which would nearly obliterate the line separating democracy from absolutism? Is it really unable to stand this test of its

character? For this is the true test of the experiment. If our democratic institutions pass this crisis unimpaired, they will be stronger than ever; if not, the decline will be rapid and irremediable. But can they pass it unimpaired? Yes. This Republic has her destiny in her hands. She may transform her greatest danger and distress into the greatest triumph of her principles. [Cheering.] There would have been no rebellion, had there not been a despotic interest incompatible with the spirit of her democratic institutions [cheers], and she has the glorious and inestimable privilege of suppressing this rebellion, by enlarging liberty instead of restraining it [great cheering], by granting rights, instead of violating them. ["Good." Applause.]

I shall have to speak of slavery, and I wish you would clearly understand me. I am an anti-slavery man. [Cheering.] All the moral impulses of my heart have made me so, and all the working of my brain has confirmed me in my faith. [Loud applause. "Hear, hear."] I have never hesitated to plead the cause of the outraged dignity of human nature. I could not do otherwise; and whatever point of argument I might gain with any one if I denied it, I would not deny it, I shall never deny it. ["Good, good." Applause.] And yet, it is not my life-long creed which would make me urge the destruction of slavery *now*. As an anti-slavery man, I would be satisfied with the effect the course of events is already producing upon slavery. When formerly I argued in favor of its restriction, I knew well and clearly, that as soon as the supremacy of the slave interest in our political life was destroyed, the very life of slavery was gone, and the institution would gradually disappear. For many reasons I would have preferred this gradual and peaceful process. I never was in favor of precipitate measures, where a quiet and steady reform was within the limits of practica-



bility. [Cheers.] But the rebellion, which placed slavery in a direct practical antagonism with the institutions most dear to us, has prodigiously hastened this development. I said already, that I do not deem another victory of slavery over the national conscience impossible; but this reaction will produce new struggles, with passions more fierce, with resentments more acrimonious and reckless, and dangerous to our democratic institutions, and violent in their nature; but as to slavery, radical and conclusive in their results. [Applause.] This rebellion has uprooted the very foundations of the system, and slavery is not far from its death. [Cheers.] It will die, and if you would, you could not prevent it. [Applause.] And thus, as an anti-slavery man, I might wait and look on with equanimity.

But what I do not want to see is, that slavery, in its death struggle, should involve the best institutions that ever made a nation great and happy. It shall not entangle the Union in its downfall, and, therefore, the Union must deliver itself of its pernicious embrace. [Great applause, long-continued, and huzzas.] And now listen to what I have to say of the third possible result of the revolution through which we are passing, the only result which will restore the Union and save the spirit of its democratic institutions. The ambition, the aspirations of men grow from the circumstances in which they live. As these circumstances change, these aspirations will take a corresponding direction. A slaveholding population, wedded to the peculiar interests of their peculiar institution will, in their aspirations and political action, be governed by the demands of those interests. If those interests are incompatible with loyalty to a certain established form of government, that population will be disloyal in its aspirations. Their way of thinking, their logic, their imagination, their habits, are so affected and controlled by their circumstances,

that as long as the latter remain the same, the former are not likely to change.

Imagine this slaveholding population with a Union army on their soil. Their forces may be dispersed, their power paralyzed, but their former aspirations, although checked, are not eradicated. They move still in the same circle of ideas, and not only their memories of the past, but also their desires for the future are still centred in that circle which slavery has drawn around them. Is not the intention and desire mother to the act? You may tell me that, however ardently they may long for a dissolution, their experience of the present rebellion will not let the idea of attempting another rebellion spring up. Are you so sure of this? True, they will not repeat the same thing in the same way. But have you never thought of it, that this Republic may be one day involved in difficulties with foreign powers, and that, in her greatest need, the disloyalists may discover another opportunity? And have you considered what our foreign policy will be, when the powers of the earth know that we harbor an enemy within our own limits ready to join hands with them? [Sensation.] How can you rely upon the Southern people unless they are sincerely loyal, and how can they be sincerely loyal as long as their circumstances are such as to make disloyalty the natural condition of their desires and aspirations? They cannot be faithful unless their desires and aspirations change. And how can you change them? By opening before them new prospects and a new future. [Cheering.]

Look at the other side of the picture. Imagine—and I suppose it is not treasonable to imagine such a thing—imagine slavery were destroyed in the course of this rebellion. Slavery, once destroyed, can never be restored. [Applause.] A reaction in this respect is absolutely impossible, so evidently impossible that it will not even

be attempted. Slavery is like an egg—once broken it can never be repaired. [Cheering.] Even the wildest fanatic will see this. However ardent a devotee of slavery a man may be, slavery once destroyed, he will see that it is useless to brood over a past which is definitively gone, and cannot be revived. He will find himself forced to direct his eyes toward the future. All his former hopes and aspirations connected with slavery vanish; his former desires are left without a tangible object. Slavery having no future, his former aspirations and desires, founded upon slavery, have none. He feels the necessity of accommodating himself to the new order of things, and the necessities of the present will make him think of the necessities of the future. Insensibly his mind drifts into plans and projects for coming days, and insensibly he has based these plans and projects upon the new order of things. A new circle of ideas has opened itself to him, and however reluctantly he may have given up the old one, he is already active in this new sphere. And this new circle of ideas being one which moves in the atmosphere of free-labor society, new interests, new hopes, new aspirations spring up, which closely attach themselves to the political institutions with which in this country free-labor society is identified. That is the Union, based upon general self-government. Gradually the reformed man will understand and appreciate the advantage of this new order of things, and loyalty will become as natural to him as disloyalty was before. [Great applause.]

It may be said, that the arch-traitors, the political propagandists of slavery, can never be made loyal; that their rancor and resentment will be implacable, and that only the second generation will be capable of a complete reform. But such men will no longer be the rulers of Southern society; for Southern society being, with all its habits and interests, no longer identified with slavery, that

element of the population will rise to prominent influence, which most easily identifies itself with free labor; I mean the non-slaveholding people of the South. [Cheers.] They have been held in a sort of moral subjection by the great slave-lords. Not for themselves but for them they were disloyal. The destruction of slavery will wipe out the prestige of their former rulers; it will lift the yoke from their necks; they will soon undertake to think for themselves, and thinking freely they will not fail to understand their own true interests. They will find in free-labor society their natural element; and free-labor society is naturally loyal to the Union. [Applause.] Let the old political leaders fret as they please; it is the free-labor majority that will give to society its character and tone. [Cheering.]

This is what I meant by so reforming Southern society as to make loyalty to the Union its natural temper and disposition. This done, the necessity of a military occupation, the rule of force will cease; our political life will soon return to the beaten track of self-government, and the restored Union may safely trust itself to the good faith of a reformed people. The antagonistic element which continually struggled against the vital principles of our system of government once removed, we shall be a truly united people with common principles, common interests, common hopes, and a common future. True, there will be other points of controversy about banks or hard money, internal improvements, free-trade or protection; but however fierce party contests may be, there will be no question involving the very foundation of our polity, and no party will refuse to submit to the verdict of popular suffrage on the controversies at issue. [Cheers.] The Union will not only be strong again, but stronger than ever before. [Great cheering.]

And if you ask me what, under ordinary circumstances,

I would propose to do, I would say: Let slavery in the District of Columbia, and wherever the Government has immediate authority, be abolished. [Loud and long-continued applause.] Let the slaves of rebels be confiscated by the General Government, and then emancipated [tremendous applause], and let a fair compensation be offered to loyal Slave States and masters, who will agree upon some system of emancipation. [Cheering.] Let this, or some other measure to the same effect, be carried out in some manner compatible with our fundamental laws, I do not care which, *provided always* the measure be thorough-going enough to render a reaction, a re-establishment of the slave power impossible [cheering]; for as long as this is possible, as long as the hopes and aspirations of the Southern people can cling to such a chance, you will not have succeeded in cutting them loose from the old vicious circle of ideas; their loyalty will be subject to the change of circumstances, and such loyalty is worth nothing. [Cheers.]

I am at once met by a vast array of objections. "It would be unconstitutional!" say some scrupulous patriots. Is it not a little surprising, that the Constitution should be quoted most frequently and persistently in favor of those who threw that very Constitution overboard? [Cheers.] Unconstitutional! Let us examine the consistency of those who on this point are so sensitive. Have you not, in the course of this rebellion, suspended in many cases the writ of habeas corpus? Have you not suppressed newspapers, and thus violated the liberty of the press? Have you not deprived citizens of their liberty without due process of law? Have you not here and there superseded the regular courts of justice by military authority? And was all this done in strict conformity with the sacred safeguards which the Constitution throws around the rights and liberties of the citizen? But you



tell me that all this was commanded by urgent necessity. Indeed! Is the necessity of restoring the true life-element of the Union less urgent than the necessity of imprisoning a traitor or stopping a secession newspaper? [Applause.] Will necessity which justifies a violation of the dearest guarantees of our own rights and liberties, will it not justify the overthrow of the most odious institution of this age? [Cheers.] What? Is the Constitution such as to countenance in an extreme case a most dangerous imitation of the practices of despotic governments, but not to countenance, even in the extremest case, the necessity of a great reform, which the enlightened spirit of our century has demanded so long, and not ceased to demand? [Cheers.] Is it, indeed, your opinion that in difficult circumstances like ours neither the writ of habeas corpus, nor the liberty of the press, nor the authority of the regular courts of justice, in one word, no right shall be held sacred and inviolable under the Constitution but that most monstrous and abominable right which permits one man to hold another as property? [Great cheering.] Is, to your Constitutional conscience, our whole magna charta of liberties nothing, and slavery all? [Loud. applause.] Slavery all, even while endeavoring by the most damnable rebellion to subvert this very Constitution?

But do not misunderstand me. I am far from underestimating the importance of Constitutional forms. Where Constitutional forms are not strictly observed, Constitutional guarantees will soon become valueless. But, where is the danger in this case? Nobody denies the constitutionality of the power of the Government to abolish slavery in the District of Columbia; nobody will deny the constitutionality of an offer of compensation to loyal slave-owners. Or would the confiscation of rebel property be unconstitutional? The Constitution defines clearly what treason consists in; and then it gives Congress the

power to pass laws for the punishment of treason. If Congress can decree the penalty of death, or imprisonment, or banishment, why not the confiscation of property? And if Congress can make lands, and houses, and horses, and wagons liable to confiscation, why not slaves? And when these slaves are confiscated by the Government, cannot Congress declare them emancipated, or rather will they not be emancipated by that very act? Is there any thing in the Constitution to hinder it? And if this can be done, why should it not?

Do you prefer the death penalty? Will you present to the world the spectacle of a great nation thirsting for the blood of a number of miserable individuals? Do you say that you want to make an example? If you stop the source of treason, no warning example to frighten traitors will be needed. [Loud cheers.] Or do you prefer imprisonment? The imprisonment of the leaders may very well go along with confiscation, and as to the imprisonment of the masses, nobody will think of it. Or do you prefer banishment? ["Yes."] How would it please you to see Europe overrun with "exiles from America," blackening your character and defiling your Government at every street-corner, and incessantly engaged in plotting against their country? And what effect would these modes of punishment have upon the Southern people? Either you are severe in applying them, and then you will excite violent resentments, or you are not severe, and then your penalties will frighten nobody, and fail of the object of serving as a warning example. In neither case will you make friends. It has frequently been said that the punishment of crime ought not to be a mere revenge taken by society, but that its principal object ought to be the reformation and improvement of the criminal. [Cheers.] This is a humane idea, worthy of this enlightened century. It ought to be carried out wherever practicable. But how

much greater and more commendable would it be if applied to a people instead of an individual! As for me, it will be to me supremely indifferent whether any one of the rebels meets a punishment adequate to his crime, provided the great source of disloyalty be punished in itself. [Cheers.] The best revenge for the past is that which furnishes us the best assurance for the future. [Applause.]

And how can we lose this great opportunity, how can we throw away the glorious privilege we enjoy of putting down a rebellion by enlarging liberty, and of punishing treason by reforming society? [Cheers.] What hinders you? It is not the Constitution! Its voice is clear, unmistakable, and encouraging. Or is there really any thing frightful to you in the idea, which we hear so frequently expressed, that every measure touching slavery would irritate the rebels very much, and make them very angry? [Laughter and cheering.] Irritate them and make them angry! I should not wonder. Every cannon-shot you fire at them, every gunboat that shells their fortifications, every bayonet charge that breaks their lines, makes them, I have no doubt, quite angry. [Continued laughter.] It may be justly supposed that every forward movement of our troops has upon them quite an irritating effect. [Great laughter. "Fort Donelson."] If you want to see them smile, you must "let them alone." But will you, therefore, load your muskets with sawdust, stop the advance of your battalions, and run your navy ashore? It must be confessed, they have never shown such tender regard for our feelings. But why will this measure make them so angry? Because it will, in the end, make them powerless for mischief. And if we can attain so desirable an end by doing this, will it not be best to support their anger with equanimity, and do it? [Cheering.] I never heard of a man, who, when assaulted

by a robber, would refrain from disarming him, because it might create unpleasant feelings. [Applause.]

But, in fact, the irritation it will create will be rather short-lived. It will die out with slavery. I have endeavored to set forth that the reformation of Southern society, resulting from these measures, is the only thing that will make the Southern people our sincere friends. Why not risk a short irritation for a lasting friendship? [Cheers.] But while I am little inclined to pay much regard to the feelings of the rebels, who would delight in cutting our throats, I deem it our duty to treat with respect the opinion of the loyal men of the South, on whose fidelity the whirl of rebellion raging round them had no power. I have heard it said that any measure touching slavery in any way would drive them over to our common enemy. Is this possible? Is their loyalty of so uncertain a complexion that they will remain true to the Union only as long as the Union does nothing which they do not fancy? What, then, would distinguish them from the traitors? for the traitors, too, would have adhered to the Union, if they had been permitted to rule it. [Cheers.] It is impossible! Whatever they might feel inclined to do if their rights were attacked in an unconstitutional manner, to constitutional measures, constitutionally enacted and carried out, a true Union man will never offer resistance. [Applause.] As we listen with respect to their opinions, so they will listen respectfully to our advice. If we speak to them as friends, they will not turn away from us as enemies.

I would say to them: "You, Union men of the South, "have faithfully clung to the cause of our common "country, although your education, the circumstances in "which you lived, and the voice of your neighbors were "well calculated to call you to the other side. You have "resisted a temptation which to many proved fatal. For

"this we honor you. We labor and fight side-by-side to  
 "restore the Union to its ancient greatness, and to their  
 "former purity the eternal principles upon which it can  
 "safely and permanently rest. What will you have—a  
 "Union continually tottering upon its foundation, or a  
 "Union of a truly united people, a Union of common prin-  
 "ciples, common interests, a common honor, and a com-  
 "mon destiny? We do not work for ourselves alone, we  
 "are not responsible to ourselves alone, but also to pos-  
 "terity. What legacy will you leave to your children—  
 "new struggles, new dangers, new revulsions, or a future  
 "of peaceful progress? An unfinished, trembling edifice,  
 "that may some day tumble down over their heads,  
 "because its foundations were not firmly laid, or a house  
 "resting upon the firm rock of a truly free government,  
 "in which untold millions may quietly and harmoniously  
 "dwell? We do not mean to disregard the obligations  
 "we owe you, neither Constitutional obligations, nor those  
 "which spring from your claims to our gratitude. We  
 "do not mean that you shall suffer in rights or fortune,  
 "nor to tear you forcibly from your ways and habits of  
 "life. But let us reason together. Do you think that  
 "slavery will live always? Consider this question calmly,  
 "and without prejudice or passion. Do you think it will  
 "live always, in spite of the thousand agencies, which, in  
 "this Nineteenth Century of ours, are busy working its  
 "destruction? It cannot be. Its end will come one day,  
 "and that day is brought nearer by the suicidal war,  
 "which, in this rebellion, slavery is waging against itself.  
 "And how do you wish that this end should be? A vio-  
 "lent convulsion, or the result of a quiet and peaceful  
 "reform? will you leave it to chance, or would you not  
 "rather keep this certain development under the moder-  
 "ating control of your voluntary action? There is but  
 "one way of avoiding new struggles, and a final revulsion,



“and that is by commencing a vigorous progressive  
“reform in time. In time, I say—and when will the  
“term have arrived? Either you control this develop-  
“ment by wise measures seasonably adopted—or it will  
“control you. How long will you wait? You speak of  
“difficulties; I see them—they are great, very great.  
“But will they not be twenty times greater twenty years  
“hence, unless you speedily commence to remove them?  
“You ask me, what shall we do with our negroes, who  
“are now four millions? And I ask you, what will you  
“do with them when they will be eight millions—or  
“rather, what will they do with you? [Cheering.] Is  
“it wise to quail before difficulties to-day, when it is sure  
“that they will be twice as great to-morrow, and equally  
“sure that some day they *must*—absolutely *must*—be  
“solved? You speak of your material interests. To-  
“day, I am convinced, there is hardly a man in the Free  
“States of this Republic who would not cheerfully con-  
“sent to compensate you amply for the sacrifices you  
“might voluntarily bring. [Applause.] Do you think  
“that after the fierce struggles which inevitably will  
“come, if slavery remains a power in the land after this  
“war, and which, with the certainty of fate, will bring  
“on its destruction, an equally liberal spirit will prevail?  
“Look at this fairly, and without prejudice. Does not  
“every consideration of safety and material interest  
“command you to commence this reform without delay?  
“Must it not be clear to the dullest mind that this task  
“which imperatively imposes itself upon you, will be the  
“easier the sooner it is taken in hand, and the more  
“difficult and fearful the longer it is put off?

“But, pardon me, Union men of the South, if, in speak-  
“ing to you of a thing of such tremendous moment, I  
“have appealed only to the meaner instincts of human  
“nature. How great, how sublime a part might you play

"in this crisis, if you appreciated the importance of your  
 "position—if you would cast off the small ambition which  
 "governs so many of you! To maintain a point in con-  
 "troversy, just because you have asserted it, to say: We  
 "can do this if we please, and nobody shall hinder us,  
 "and therefore we will do it; or, we have slavery, and  
 "nobody has a right to interfere with it, and therefore  
 "we will maintain it—how small an ambition is this!  
 "How much greater, how infinitely nobler would it be,  
 "if you would boldly place yourself at the head of the  
 "movement, and say to us: We grew up in the habits  
 "of slaveholding society, and our interests were long  
 "identified with the institution, and we think also that  
 "you cannot lawfully deprive us of it; but since we see  
 "that it is the great disturbing element in this Republic,  
 "we voluntarily sacrifice it to the peace-of the nation,  
 "we immolate it as a patriotic offering on the altar of  
 "the country! [Loud cheers.] Where are the hearts  
 "large enough for so great and exalted an ambition?  
 "Ah, if some man of a powerful will and lofty devotion  
 "would rise up among you; if an Andrew Johnson would  
 "go among his people [great applause], and tell them  
 "how noble it is to sacrifice for the good of the country,  
 "not only one's blood, but also one's prejudices and false  
 "pride [cheers], he would be greater than the generals  
 "who fight our battles, greater than the statesmen who  
 "direct our affairs, and coming generations would grate-  
 "fully remember him as the true pacificator of his  
 "country. [Applause.] He would stand above those  
 "that are first in war; he would be the true hero of  
 "peace; he would not be second in the hearts of his  
 "countrymen." [Great cheering.] Thus I would speak  
 to the Union men of the South.

But whatever they may do, or not do, our duty remains  
 the same. We cannot wait one for another; the develop-

ment of things presses on, and the day of the final decision draws nearer every hour. Americans, I have spoken to you the plain, cold language of fact and reason. I have not endeavored to capture your hearts with passionate appeals, nor your senses with the melody of sonorous periods. I did not desire to rush you on to hasty conclusions; for what you resolve upon with coolness and moderation, you will carry out with firmness and courage. And yet it is difficult for a man of heart to preserve that coolness and moderation when looking at the position this proud nation is at present occupying before the world; when I hear in this great crisis the miserable cant of party; when I see small politicians busy to gain a point on their opponents; when I see great men in fluttering trepidation lest they spoil their "record," or lose their little capital of consistency. [Cheering.]

What! you, the descendants of those men of iron who preferred a life-or-death struggle with misery on the bleak and wintry coast of New England to submission to priestcraft and kingcraft; you, the offspring of those hardy pioneers who set their faces against all the dangers and difficulties that surround the early settler's life; you, who subdued the forces of wild nature, cleared away the primeval forest, covered the endless prairie with human habitations; you, this race of bold reformers who blended together the most incongruous elements of birth and creed, who built up a Government which you called a Model Republic, and undertook to show mankind how to be free; you, the mighty nation of the West, that presumes to defy the world in arms, and to subject a hemisphere to its sovereign dictation; you, who boast of recoiling from no enterprise ever so great, and no problem ever so fearful — the spectral monster of slavery stares you in the face, and now your blood runs cold, and all your

courage fails you? For half a century it has disturbed the peace of this Republic; it has arrogated to itself your national domain; it has attempted to establish its absolute rule, and to absorb even your future development; it has disgraced you in the eyes of mankind, and now it endeavors to ruin you, if it cannot rule you; it raises its murderous hand against the institutions most dear to you; it attempts to draw the power of foreign nations upon your heads; it swallows up the treasures you have earned by long years of labor; it drinks the blood of your sons, and the tears of your wives, and still you hesitate! Still you listen when its friends whisper in your ears: Whatever slavery may have done to you, whatever you may suffer, touch it not! However many thousand millions of your wealth it may cost, however much blood you may have to shed in order to disarm its murderous hand, touch it not! However many years of peace and prosperity you may have to sacrifice in order to prolong its existence, touch it not! And if it should cost you your self-respect—hear this story:

On the Lower Potomac, as the papers tell us, a negro comes within our lines, and tells the valiant defenders of the Union that his master conspires with the rebels, and has a quantity of arms concealed in a swamp; our soldiers go and find the arms; the master reclaims his slave; the slave is given up; the master ties him to his horse, drags him along eleven miles to his house, lashes him to a tree, and with the assistance of his overseer, whips him three hours, three mortal hours; then the negro dies. That black man served the Union, Slavery attempts to destroy the Union, the Union surrenders the black man to Slavery, and he is whipped to death—touch it not! [“Hear, hear.” Profound sensation.] Let an imperishable blush of shame cover every cheek in this boasted land of freedom—but be careful not to touch it! Ah, what a dark divinity is this,

that we must sacrifice to it our peace, our prosperity, our blood, our future, our honor! What an insatiable vampire is this that drinks out the very marrow of our manliness! ["Shame."] Pardon me; this sounds like a dark dream, like the offspring of a hypochondric imagination, and yet—have I been unjust in what I have said? ["No."]

Is it asking too much of you that you shall secure by vigorous measures against future dangers all that is most dear to you? Or is it not true that such measures would not be opposed had they not the smell of principle about them? ["That's it." Applause.] Or do the measures proposed really offend your Constitutional conscience? Or are they impolitic? What policy can be better than that which secures peace and liberty to the people? Or are they inhuman? I have heard it said that a measure touching Slavery might disturb the tranquillity and endanger the fortunes of many innocent people in the South. This is a possibility which I sincerely deplore. But many of us will remember how often they were told it in former years, that true philanthropy begins at home. Disturb the tranquillity and endanger the fortunes of innocent people in the South!—and there your tenderness stops? Are the six hundred thousand loyal men of the North, who have offered their lives, and all they have and they are, for the Union, less innocent? Are those who have soaked the soil of Virginia, and Missouri, and Kentucky, and Tennessee with their blood—are they guilty? Are the tears of Northern widows and children for their dead husbands and fathers less warm and precious than the tears of a planter's lady about the threatened loss of her human chattels? [Sensation.] If you have such tender feelings about the dangers and troubles of others, how great must be the estimation you place upon the losses and sufferings of *our* people! Streams of blood, and a stream of tears for every drop of blood; the happiness of so many thousand families



forever blasted, the prosperity of the country ruined for so many years — how great must be the compensation for all this! Shall all this be squandered for nothing? for a mere temporary cessation of hostilities, a prospect of new troubles, a mere fiction of peace?

People of America! I implore you, for once, be true to yourselves, [great applause,] and do justice to the unmistakable instinct of your minds and the noble impulses of your hearts. Let it not be said that the great American Republic is afraid of the Nineteenth Century. [Loud cheers.] And you, legislators of the country, and those who stand at the helm of Government, you, I intreat, do not trifle with the blood of the people. This is no time for politely consulting our enemies' tastes, or for sparing our enemies' feelings. Be sure, whatever progressive measures you may resolve upon, however progressive they may be, the people are ready to sustain you with heart and hand. [Loud and long-continued cheering and waving of hats.] The people do not ask for any thing that might seem extravagant. They do not care for empty glory; they do not want revenge, but they do want a fruitful victory and a lasting peace. [Great applause.]

When pondering over the tendency of this great crisis, two pictures of our future rise up before my eyes. Here is one: The Republic, distracted by a series of revulsions and reactions, all tending toward the usurpation of power, and the gradual destruction of that beautiful system of self-government to which this country owes its progress and prosperity; the nation sitting on the ruins of her glory, looking back to our days with a sorrowful eye, and saying: "Then we ought to have acted like men, and all would be well now." Too late, too late! And here is the other: A Government, freed from the shackles of a despotic and usurping interest, resting safely upon the loyalty of a united people; a nation engaged in the peaceable discus-

sion of its moral and material problems, and quietly working out its progressive development; its power growing in the same measure with its moral consistency; the esteem of mankind centering upon a purified people; a Union firmly rooted in the sincere and undivided affection of all its citizens; a regenerated Republic, the natural guide and beacon light of all legitimate aspirations of humanity. These are the two pictures of our future. Choose! [Immense applause.]

## X.

### PEACE, LIBERTY AND EMPIRE.

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SPEECH DELIVERED AT CONCERT HALL, PHILADELPHIA, ON THE 16<sup>TH</sup> OF SEPTEMBER, 1864.

*This speech was delivered in the Presidential campaign of 1864, at the first of a series of meetings arranged by the Union League of Philadelphia. The topics discussed are still fresh in the memory of the people, and need no further explanation.*

FELLOW-CITIZENS:—

In times like these, when the passing events of every day cast ever-varying lights and shadows upon our situation, when our minds are tossed from fear to hope, from despondency to exultation, and back again to doubt, it is necessary that we should now and then fix our eyes firmly upon those things and ideas which, through all the vicissitudes of the hour, must serve as immovable and permanent points of direction.

The affairs of this country have evidently arrived at a crisis. We are engaged in a war for the restoration of the Union. The Union is not yet restored, but we hear the cry of *Peace*. The desire of peace is not peculiar to any social division or political party—it is cherished by all. But the question, What is peace, and how is it to be restored? this is the question to be solved by a vote of the people in November. Upon this question the mind of every conscientious citizen ought to be made up, whatever events to-day or to-morrow may bring. This ques-

tion once irrevocably answered by the voice of the people, the future of the country is decided for ever.

The advocates of peace we can divide into four great classes :

First. The rebels themselves ; they desire peace on the basis of separation and a final dissolution of the Union.

Second. A large number of influential men in foreign countries, especially in England and France, who affect to believe that the war is hopeless on our part, and urge us to consent to peace on the basis of separation ; and who also urge foreign governments to intercede for that purpose.

Third. A numerous political party in the loyal States, who advocate, partly, peace at any price ; partly, the offering of concessions and compromise to the rebels ; but who all express the desire that the war shall cease.

Fourth. The great Union party, who advocate peace on the basis of the restoration of the Union, and a full and complete vindication of the authority of the Government, and the employment of all the means which the object may demand.

It seems, then, that "peace" is a word of wide meaning, and before using it as a political rallying-cry, we ought to be careful to ascertain and define its true significance.

The conditions upon which the rebels offer peace we all know. It is the recognition of their independence ; it is the cession of all the States originally belonging to their Confederacy, with the addition of Maryland, Kentucky, Missouri, and the District of Columbia ; the cession of all the Territories west of the Confederate States to the Pacific, and probably some division of the public property in the hands of the Government at the commencement of the war. This the rebels demand. It may be doubted whether modesty is one of their virtues. They may

indeed be expected to yield a point or two. [Applause.] Although our people seem to have made up their minds about these propositions, there are many persons abroad, and a few among us, who believe in the possibility of peace on the basis of disunion. In England there are men who seem quite amazed and indignant that we should refuse to treat upon such reasonable conditions.

Permit me a rapid glance at the two decisive questions—first, Whether a settlement can be made on that basis? and second, Whether this settlement would lead to a durable peace?

What shall be the boundary line? The Rocky Mountains would not be too high, nor the great lakes too broad, as a barrier between two powers exasperated by bitter feuds. But the only natural frontier we can find is the line of the Ohio and the Potomac. Can we concede that? South of it there are two States that remained true to the Union during the war, Kentucky and West Virginia. If we might agree to let the original seceders go, could we be base and treacherous enough to sell our friends, to deliver them helpless to the tender mercies of their mortal enemies? for the rebels hate the Union people of the Slave States more bitterly even than they hate Massachusetts. Can we abandon them? Impossible! What if the rebels do not yield that point?—if we are obliged to fight for Kentucky and West Virginia? Well, then, we can just as well fight for the whole Union; the war may go on, and there is the end of the settlement. [Applause.] But suppose the rebels agree to that territorial arrangement. Then the second question arises, Will this settlement have the necessary elements of stability? To the Confederacy it will be distasteful. As in Kentucky and West Virginia the majority stood by us, so a strong minority stood by the rebels, and the same moral obligations which bind us to the first bind them to the second.



The result will be this: the minority in Kentucky and West Virginia will unite with the restless and reckless element in the Confederacy to precipitate the latter into warlike enterprises for the recovery of the two States, and the authorities of the Confederacy will not long be able to resist. Does this look like a solid peace? So much for the South.

But can the settlement be satisfactory or even endurable to the North? Remember that the supposed boundary lines will leave the lower course and the mouth of the Mississippi in the hands of the Confederacy. A foreign power holding the mouth of the Mississippi! In the early stages of our history it was regarded as a self-evident truth that such power must be or become our natural enemy. But if at that time, when the great Mississippi Valley was a silently brooding wilderness, it was thought that we must have the mouth of the river, because the foreign hand that held it might choke our future development, what shall we say now when the Mississippi Valley has become the garden of America, the seat of empire? The matter is hardly a fit subject for discussion. The Mississippi is the great harbor of the Gulf of Mexico; it is the Atlantic Ocean ramified thousands of miles into the heart of the Continent. [Applause.] Its great port is not New Orleans alone: it is St. Louis, it is Cincinnati, and the great cities that will spring up on the upper river and along the course of the gigantic Missouri. And the mouth of the Mississippi in the hands of a foreign power? Let it be so, and half our independence is gone. [Applause.] Indeed, freedom of commerce on the great river might be stipulated by treaty. But what of that? Will not the South, whenever any question of international dispute arises, be able to force us to any concession or to an offensive war merely by suspending the operation of the treaty, and by tightening its grasp

upon the great outlet? Is not this as if some person were constitutionally permitted to have his grip upon your throat, able and ready, whenever he wants anything of you, to stop the circulation of your blood merely by squeezing a little? And this humiliating situation anybody expects our active, enterprising, spirited and brave people to endure? The discussion of this possibility would be a mere waste of words. The people of the United States have bought the mouth of the Mississippi, once with their money, and twice with their blood. [Great applause.] To give it away would be merely to produce the necessity of buying it a fourth time. Can the South yield it? No. Can the North do without it? No. And then?

I might go on to show how the proximity of dangerous neighbors immediately on our borders—of neighbors whose guns command our very capital, and who hold the natural outlet of the most productive part of our country—would at once oblige us to be in constant readiness for attack and defence; how large standing armies would swallow up the financial resources we might otherwise devote to the payment of our national debt; how the first success of a secession movement would inevitably draw similar attempts at dismemberment after it; how the minds of the people would be continually agitated by conspiracies and treasonable enterprises; how all this would steadily undermine our liberal institutions by producing a centralization of power; how military necessity would become a standing and commanding element in our political life; and gradually transform the republic of peace into an engine of war; but it is enough.

It must be clear to every candid mind, that a settlement on the basis of disunion, far from securing a permanent peace, will be nothing but a mere temporary armistice, and must, after a short trial, produce the strengthened

conviction in the minds of our people, that for the peace, liberty, and prosperity of the North American continent, the restoration of the Union is an absolute necessity. [Great applause.] And what then? The war will be resumed. But under what circumstances! Now we fight the South alone, as a legitimate government fights a rebellious combination; then we shall have to fight a recognized, fully organized, and immensely strengthened Confederacy, with her European cotton-allies at her heels. Now we have the Mississippi; we have the most important points on the Atlantic coast; we have the great central position of East Tennessee; we have the heart of Georgia. We shall give up all this, merely for the privilege of paving every foot of that road again with our dollars and of sprinkling every inch of it again with the blood of our people! [Great applause.] O, my good friends in England and France! do you not think, after all, that while we are at it, it will be wisest and most economical for us to go through with it? You, who effect such a holy horror of war and bloodshed, do you not think, after all, that it will be a saving of blood and calamity if we persevere in a war of which we can see the end, instead of running into one that will be interminable?

Pardon me for devoting so much time to a subject upon which your convictions are settled. Such arguments may also be lost upon the peace-clamorers in France and England. But it might be well, perhaps, for them to know that we can see no peace but in Union, and that their efforts to persuade us to the contrary will indeed fail of their object, but will certainly confirm us in the suspicion that they may love peace well, but would love the permanent dismemberment of this Republic better. [Applause.]

Peace with disunion being impossible, it is necessary, then, if for the sake of peace alone, that the Union should be restored. And how can it be restored? Either by the

voluntary or the forced submission of the rebels to the lawful authority of the government. This leads us to the third class of peace-makers. There is a party among us which pretends that it can secure the voluntary submission of the rebels, and thus restore peace. Its policy is defined by the following resolution adopted by its National Convention :

*“Resolved, That this Convention does explicitly declare “as the sense of the American people, that after four “years of failure to restore the Union by the experiment “of war, during which, under the pretense of a military “necessity or war-power higher than the Constitution, “the Constitution itself has been disregarded in every “part, and public liberty and private right alike trodden “down, and the material prosperity of the country essentially impaired, justice, humanity, liberty, and the public “welfare demand that immediate efforts be made for a cessation of hostilities, with a view to an ultimate Convention of “all the States, or other peaceable means, to the end that, “at the earliest practicable moment, peace may be restored “on the basis of the Federal Union of the States.”*

This policy is to be practically carried out if that party should be intrusted with the powers of the government, of which it seems rather confident, inasmuch as it explicitly declares “that such is the sense of the American people.” I apprehend “the American people” will claim the privilege of thinking about this matter, and will explicitly declare their sense in due time. [Great applause and laughter.]

The resolution contains two positive and definite, and one rather indefinite proposition. The two definite propositions are these : First, that the experiment of war as a means of restoring the Union is a failure—this is a clear and positive statement—and second, that immediate efforts must be made for a cessation of hostilities. This

is positive also, and, as a sequence of the first proposition, cannot mean anything else but that the experiment of war must be stopped and abandoned. Here ends the clear and positive part of the programme. The third, indefinite proposition, is, that the war must be stopped "with a view to an ultimate Convention of all the States, or other peaceable means," etc. Mark the words, "with a view to;" this looks to a future period not yet determined, and is rather foggy.

The first two propositions can be carried into effect by the Democratic party, if it should be the sense of the American people to place that party in power. It can declare, and to make good its declaration, it can make the war a failure; and it can also stop the war. But the carrying out of the third proposition requires the co-operation of Jefferson Davis and the rebellious people of the seceded States. A Convention of the loyal States the Democratic party can have, but a Convention of *all* the States, with a view to the restoration of peace on the basis of the Federal Union, cannot be had, unless such be the sense of Jefferson Davis and the States in rebellion. And if such be not the sense of Jefferson Davis and the Southern Confederacy, what then? That the Chicago platform saith not. But this is just the point the American people should like to know. This is no idle question; it is just *the* question upon which the whole matter hinges. For, mark you well, the resolution does not say: "We demand a cessation of hostilities *on condition* that a Convention of all the States, or some other peaceable means, by which the Union can be restored be agreed to; if not, we shall continue the war;" but the demand of a cessation is positive on the ground that the experiment of war has proved a failure; the war is to be stopped on the demand of justice, humanity, liberty, and the public welfare, with a view to something that may or may not happen. I ask



again, What if it does not happen? What if Jefferson Davis takes your cessation of hostilities with a view to laugh at your Convention and other peaceable means to restore the Union? And this he is most likely, nay, almost certain to do, for peace without the condition of reunion is just what he wants, and a Convention and reunion is just what he does not want. Well, what then? Will you tacitly acquiesce in the establishment of the Southern Confederacy? How can you, since you tell us that you are faithful to the Union? Or will you resume the war? How can you, since you declare that the experiment of war has proved a failure, and that "justice, humanity, liberty, and the public welfare" demand its cessation? What, then, in the name of common sense, will you do? Here we look upon a jumble of contradictions so glaring that our heads begin to reel, and we wonder how it could happen to the whole wisdom of a great party in solemn Convention assembled to hatch out so bottomless an absurdity. [Laughter and applause.]

The gentlemen who come with so amazing a proposition before the country will, indeed, tell us that Jefferson Davis and his people *may* agree to terms of peace on the basis of the Union. Pray, where did they obtain their information? We have some means of ascertaining the sentiments of the rebel government and of those men who make public opinion in that part of the country. We have the official enunciations of their chiefs; we have the sayings of their public speakers; we have their public papers; we have a large quantity of information from private sources published in the newspapers of our States. All these things are before the people; everybody that has eyes may see, and that has ears may hear them. And now I appeal to any man that has kept the run of the times, did he ever see or hear the least indication of a willingness on the part of the rebel government or their

leading men even to consider the proposition of a Convention or other peaceable means looking to the restoration of peace on the basis of reunion? Is it true or not, that public sentiment in rebeldom, as far as we have means of knowing it, may be fairly summed up in what one of their newspapers said, that, if we presented to them a white sheet of paper with the signatures of our authorities at the bottom of it, on which they, the rebels, might write their own conditions of reunion, they would scorn to accept it? Do we not hear this repeated daily in numberless variations? Did they not ridicule and vilify in the most contemptuous manner certain Northern Democrats who pretended that they could negotiate a reunion on the basis of a compromise?

But this is not the only test of the matter. The rebels know full well that any offer of terms on their part, nay, the mere indication in the press of a willingness on their part to come back, would materially contribute to increase and inflame the divisions now existing among us; they know that a half-way offer of a compromise would be a good stroke of policy for them; and now, did you ever hear any one of their public men who could speak with anything like authority, admit even the idea that such a thing was possible? Why, even the celebrated peace-adventurers at Niagara Falls, who certainly meant mischief and nothing but mischief, said in their final winding-up letter that they had not the remotest intention of entertaining any proposition looking to reunion. And they and their friends in the North might certainly have made capital out of such a thing. And even Mr. Benjamin, in his late dispatch to Mr. Mason, while evidently laboring to give his Northern friends as much comfort as possible, could not refrain from stating most emphatically that the recognition of the independence of the Confederacy was a condition *sine quâ non* for all peace nego-

tiations. Why is this? Because a public man of standing in the Confederacy cannot afford even to appear friendly to the idea of reunion under any circumstances. And yet, in the face of all this, with all this evidence before them, knowing all this, the men of the Chicago Convention dare to hold out to the American people the promise that the rebels will agree to a Convention of all the States or other peaceable means by which the Union can be restored. And upon an hypothesis so wild, upon an assumption so wilful, an assumption so completely without the least shadow of a foundation, they advise us to stop the war with a view to a thing they know they cannot effect. They dare to advise you to incur all the disadvantages a cessation of hostilities would involve for a chance which they themselves do not believe in!

This is more than absurdity; or, if you will still call it so, this absurdity is a symptom of something else than a mere confusion of ideas; it speaks of purposes that dare not avow themselves; of designs that need a disguise; of schemes that shun the light. [Applause.] Well might the open allies of the rebellion among us, the Vallandighams, the Longs, the Woods, the Seymours, the Harries, the Pendletons, cast their votes for such a resolution; for a virtual abandonment of the war without a condition *sine quâ non*, only with a view to a thing which, as they must know, will never be effected in this way, what else can it lead to than a tacit recognition of Southern independence? I understand the satisfaction with which open rebel sympathizers look upon their work; they indeed did take a candidate not their first choice, but they endeavored to gag and bind him, mouth and hand and foot, and although they could not defeat him by placing him upon such a platform, they have at least disgraced him. [Applause.] But what I cannot understand is, that those who indeed desire peace, but also sincerely believe in the neces-

sity of restoring the Union, should permit themselves to be taken in by so clownish a juggle, by so transparent a fraud. It is for them that I will discuss the matter in its whole length and breadth.

Suppose, then, the party which passed this resolution is raised to power. The first official act to which it stands pledged by its platform will be to propose to Jefferson Davis an immediate cessation of hostilities. The proud Southron, at once recognizing his old friends, will forthwith remember that they stand pledged to stop the war, because they consider it a failure; to stop it in the name of justice and the public welfare. He will at once feel himself, and in fact be, master of the situation. Knowing all this, he will say: "Certainly, hostilities shall be 'stopped'; 'you have only to negotiate with me as the 'head of an independent Confederacy (see Benjamin's 'letter'); you have only to withdraw your armies from 'Southern soil; you have only to take away your navy 'from Southern ports; you have only to raise the blockade 'of our coast, and hostilities are stopped. Then you will 'have to dismiss the negro soldiers from your military 'service; and as to the matter with a view to which you 'propose to cease hostilities, we will see about that 'at 'the first practicable moment.'"

I am at once met by an outcry from the Democratic side: "We shall never do that—never!" You will not? Are you not the same men who pledged yourselves in the Chicago platform to stop the war, because it was a failure—to stop it on the score of justice, humanity, liberty, and the public welfare, merely with a view to a thing which, as you well know, will never happen, unless the rebels be forced to it—and now cry War! war that is a failure, war that is against justice and what all? But, you say, we did not mean it so. Why, then, did you say it so? [Laughter.] But do you really know what you will do? Let me see

who you are, and I will tell you what you are capable of doing. You are the same men who, from 1848 to 1860, went the whole disgraceful way from the Wilmot Proviso to the Lecompton Constitution, from free-soil to the forcing of slavery upon free soil, protesting at every stopping-place, by all that is good and great, that you would not go a single step further. [Laughter and great applause.] And you will have us believe that you are not going to do this or that! Did you know what you were going to do when you went into the Chicago Convention? How many of you are there who would not have sworn upon their sacred honor that they would never vote for a resolution like that which was passed—and did they not do it? I tell you in the face of your protestations and those of your candidate, you permit yourselves once to be infatuated with the idea that you can coax and buy the rebels back into the Union by concession, and whatever they may ask of you, you will do it, for it is only the first step that costs—and surely, Jefferson Davis will not spare you, for his foot is too familiar with the necks of his old Northern friends. [Great applause.] The old silly cry, “Do not irritate the South! do not irritate it by the blockade! do not irritate it by the armed negroes!” [laughter], will again have its old sway; your desires and delusive hopes will give birth to the most obsequious schemes, and soon you will be in a state of mind of which it will be difficult to say where folly ends and where treason begins.

Still, I will give you the full benefit of your protestations. I might describe the ruinous effect, the temporary withdrawal of our armies, or even the temporary raising of the blockade, would have upon the future chances of the war; how hundreds of French and English vessels would fly into Savannah and Wilmington with arms, and ammunition, and clothing, and railroad iron,



and machinery, and other things handy to have: how those ships would fly out again loaded with cotton; how, upon the value of that cotton, the Confederate loan would find new buyers, and their wretched finances would look up; how the whole fighting capacity of the South would receive a new and tremendous impulse. I might describe all that, but I will forbear.

There are two measures, which, in case of their accession to power, the Chicago party would most certainly execute. Victims to that most ridiculous of all mental diseases, the negrophobia, they would dismiss our two hundred thousand negro soldiers; and yielding to that most pernicious of all passions, demagogism, they would give up the idea of a conscription. Would they not? I dare any one of their public men, I dare their candidate, I dare the most bellicose of their partisans—I *dare* them to say that they will not do so. And the consequences? With one hand they will deplete and weaken the army, and with the other they will throw away the means of filling it up and strengthening it. Take two hundred thousand negro soldiers from the garrisons and posts they are guarding, take two hundred thousand white soldiers from Atlanta and Petersburg to fill the places left vacant by the negroes, and I call upon any military authority in this country to say: Will it, or will it not, be impossible for our two great armies, under Grant and Sherman, to hold the field?

“Retreat! retreat!” would be the cry; and it is, perhaps, with a view to this contingency that the Chicago Convention has selected its distinguished candidate. [Long-continued applause.] Do not speak of rapidly filling the vacuum with new recruits; for you give up the conscription, and I apprehend your friends in Indiana and Illinois and Ohio, your Sons of Liberty, and American Knights, will be rather slow to rush to the field with

their imported revolvers. [Laughter.] Far from being able to strengthen our army, you will rather weaken, dishearten, and demoralize what remains of it. The soldiers witnessing with disgust these senseless and ruinous proceedings, suspicion and distrust would creep into the ranks, and the brave boys would lose half of their strength by losing their confidence and faith.

And then, indeed, the "cessation of hostilities" would acquire a new aspect. Unable to keep the field, far from being able to offer an armistice, you might find yourselves obliged to approach the rebel chief hat in hand to *beg* for one; and surely, if he should have the contemptuous magnanimity to grant it, he would hardly spare your feelings with his conditions. Is that the cessation of hostilities you desire? It is certainly the cessation of hostilities the rebels desire. This kind of armistice will at least have one advantage; it will save you the trouble of discussing what conditions you will or will not propose. The rebels will take that trouble off your hands. [Laughter and applause.] But, seriously and soberly speaking, I deem the opposition of the Woods and Valandighams\* to the Chicago nominee a most rash and ill-advised movement; for, if they let him only act upon the general idiosyncrasies, the common prejudices and impulses of the party, he will as certainly and safely ruin the prospects of the war as they themselves could do with their ingeniously devised cessation of hostilities, which offers to the rebels that which they desire, together with the privilege of refusing that which we desire. The one is a military way of doing it, the other a civil one; the one is "strategy," the other diplomacy; and I candidly think the difference is not worth quarrelling about. At all events, it would be well for the peace men to set a

\* The opposition of the peace men in the Democratic party ceased soon afterwards.

good example by keeping peace among themselves. [Laughter and applause.]

But I will follow the advocates of the Chicago peace platform into the farthest recesses of their argument, which we find, not in their resolutions, but in their papers.

They tell us, that while the rebel government is for war, the Southern people are for peace; and that we therefore must appeal from the rebel government to the Southern people. Certainly a good idea. But how carry it out? The number of peace men in the South is undoubtedly large. They may fairly be divided into two classes: first, Secessionists on principle, who are for peace only because they are tired of the war; and second, Union men on principle, who are for peace on the basis of reunion. These two classes undoubtedly comprise a large number of people, but probably not strong enough to control the rebel government; for if they are strong enough to do so, why do they not do it? Our Chicago men say we must strengthen them. Certainly, but how?

Why do the secessionists who are for peace offer no effective opposition to the rebel government? Because, though indeed sick of the war, they would like to have separation along with peace. Then it is evident they are not yet tired enough of the war. The remedy is simple. We must carry on the war with such terrible energy as to make all rebeldom tremble and shake. That will make them so tired of the war, that after a little while they will only be too happy to make peace at any price. Is not this clear? [Applause.] Now for the Union men in the rebel States. There are undoubtedly many of them; all the blacks and a large number of whites. Why do they not exercise any decisive influence in rebeldom. Because the rebel government is too strong for them, and keeps them down. What is the remedy? It is simple. We must break the strength of the rebel government by deal-

ing it as heavy blows as we can strike. That will give the Union men air to breathe, and freedom of action. Is not this common sense? [Applause.]

But how the secessionists who are tired of the war can be made Unionists by stopping the war for humanity's sake; or how we can aid the Union men, who cannot stir, because the rebel government is too strong for them, by giving the same rebel government a chance to become still stronger—that, I suspect, it will take the whole logic and eloquence in Chicago Convention assembled to make intelligible to an intelligent people. [Great laughter and applause.]

The whole wisdom of the intricate peace policy of the Chicago party may be fairly summed up as follows: You are struggling with a highwayman who has robbed you of your valuables. You are stronger than he, and about to overcome him. Suddenly you stop, and say: "Now, my good fellow, I will struggle no longer; I see it is a failure on my part; to struggle longer would be against justice, humanity, and our common welfare; I let you go, with a view to meet you again, and to persuade you to give me back, at the most practicable moment, what you have stolen." Is not this Bedlam? [Tremendous laughter and applause.]

But now I arrive at a feature of this business which places its true character in still clearer light. It is well known that some of the leading powers of Europe, with whom we are in most immediate contact, affect to believe in, because they desire, the final dissolution of this Republic. Whatever motives you may assign for this fact—the competition growing from our spirit of commercial enterprise, jealousy of our constantly growing strength, hatred of our republican institutions—call it what you will, the fact is too thinly disguised to escape recognition. Still, I wish you to understand, in speaking of the tendencies of

some of the political and commercial interests of England and France, it is far from me to cast a slur upon the noble masses of those countries; for I sincerely believe the cause of universal liberty in this country has no truer friends abroad than they are. [Great applause.]

At present, the so-called Confederacy is a mere association of political bodies engaged in a rebellion against their legitimate Government. They are, indeed, recognized as belligerents, but not admitted into the family of nations as an independent and equal member. Foreign powers, however desirous of making separation permanent, yet hesitate to enter into open relations and co-operation with the Confederacy; first, because our Government maintains with firmness the justice of our cause, and its inflexible resolution to bring back the rebellious States; and, secondly, because the stigma of slavery rests upon the rebellion, and European governments have some respect for public opinion in their own countries, and for the enlightened judgment of mankind. But is it reasonable to suppose that they will refrain from doing so when they have a plausible pretext? They would, no doubt, be most glad to see us do for them what they are ashamed to do for themselves. As you, in times gone by—and I hope gone by for ever—were required to do for the slaveholder the dirty work he deemed below his dignity to do for himself—catch his runaways—so foreign powers would rather like you to perform for them a hardly cleaner work, which they themselves feel much delicacy about—recognize as an independent power a Confederacy founded upon the corner-stone of slavery. [Great applause.] “Oh!” you say, “they will have to wait for that.” Will they, indeed? Here is the Chicago platform, declaring explicitly as the sense of the American people that the war is a failure, and must be stopped. The war declared a failure in the eyes of the whole world; and not only that, but that



it must be stopped on the score of "*justice, humanity, liberty, and the public welfare.*" And this you cry into the ears of England and France, who merely wait to hear you say so! Have not our enemies in those countries always advocated the recognition of the Confederacy on the ground that the war, on our part, was hopeless, unjust, inhuman, tyrannical, and ruinous? With what delight the *London Herald* and the *London Times* will hail this declaration! With what triumph they will point to it! Is it not admitting all, all they have been contending for—hopelessness, injustice, inhumanity, tyranny, ruin, all? And now, if the American people should be so lost to all sense of shame and decency as to endorse this declaration at a National election, with what face will you stand up before England and France, and ask them not to recognize the Confederacy? If this war is indeed what you affirm—a failure, and hopeless, unjust, inhuman, and ruinous—would it not be an act of mercy, of justice, of humanity, to step in and stop it? And do you not, by this most infamous declaration, invite them to do so? I will prove to you that this is no mere offspring of my imagination. Some time ago, Lord Lyons wrote to his Government an official dispatch, in which the following passage occurred:

"Several of the leaders of the Democratic party sought interviews with me, both before and after the arrival of the intelligence of Gen. McClellan's dismissal. The subject uppermost in their minds, while they were speaking to me, was naturally that of foreign mediation between North and South. Many of them seemed to think that this mediation must come at last; but they appeared to be afraid of its coming too soon. It was evident that they apprehended that a premature proposal of foreign intervention would afford the Radical party a means of reviving the violent war spirit, and thus of defeating the powerful plans of the Conservatives. They appeared to

“regard the present moment as peculiarly unfavorable for  
“such an offer, and, indeed, to hold that it would be essen-  
“tial to the success of any proposal from abroad *that it*  
“*should be deferred until the control of the Executive Govern-*  
“*ment should be in the hands of the Conservative party.*”

So far Lord Lyons.

Foreign powers having at last found and seized upon a pretext for officially meddling with our difficulties, such as your invitation would give them—and, indeed, remembering Lord Lyons’s significant despatch, this seems to be part of the Chicago programme—we shall see the working of a new agency in the affairs of this continent; an agency which, fortunately, was unknown to us as long as the country was one; and that agency is *foreign influence*.

The same reasons for which England and France desired the breaking up of this Union, the same reasons will also impel them to do all they can to make separation permanent, and the whole of their influence, powerful as it will be—for the Confederacy will necessarily lean upon her European friends—will be thrown against reunion. That influence will indeed be powerful, for it will not extend to the Government, but it will at once run through all the channels of trade. And now is there anybody credulous enough to believe, that against such fearful odds you can carry out the timid scheme with a view to which you mean to stop the war? Foreign influence, once admitted, as it will be by this policy, will have the casting vote in all that pends between us and the South. We shall not have two great powers on this continent, but four, and all but one bitterly against reunion. Divide and rule, is the old saying; but not those will rule that are divided. [Applause.] Whatever our ultimate decision may be after such developments, whether to resume the war at once, or to acquiesce in separation, and then, after a short breathing spell, launch into the confusion of a new conflict, there

is one thing certain : we shall find the South so immensely strengthened, that, if for a people like ours any task could be hopeless, this would be hopeless indeed.

And in the same measure as the South will be strengthened by this Chicago policy, so we shall be weakened. I have already alluded to the demoralization and disintegration of our military strength by its effect. But that is not all.

At present the enlightened opinion of the liberal masses of Europe is on our side. That opinion may in a crisis prove strong enough to bridle the action of governments. How can we expect that opinion to be true to us, if we are treacherous to ourselves? With what face can we demand its generous support, if we confess a failure and throw doubt upon the justice and humanity of our own cause? You have heard of the people of Germany pouring their gold lavishly into the treasury of the United States. [Applause.] You have heard of a loan of a thousand millions having been offered, and being now in progress of negotiation. Would those people who are standing by us so generously in our embarrassments, would they have done so, if they did not trust in our ability and determination to carry through the war? And now they are told by a party that boast of being about to grasp the reins of government, that the war is a failure, and being a failure, and being unjust, inhumane, and ruinous, must be given up. You, who are so clamorous about the condition of our Treasury, do you call that raising our credit abroad, do you call that helping our finances out of a distressed condition? Truly, if it were your avowed object to reduce the Government to total impotency for want of means, to render the nation incapable of a vigorous movement, to lay it prostrate in utter helplessness at the feet of its enemies, your means could not be more judiciously chosen, you could not operate with more infernal acuteness. [Great applause.]

We may ask ourselves : How is it possible that a policy so utterly absurd, reckless, and pernicious should find any supporters among men whose sound sense and patriotism are not completely extinguished ? I find the reason in a vague impression, here and there prevailing, that the Union and universal good feeling may be restored by a policy of conciliation and compromise. I find it in the generous impulses of magnanimous hearts, which insist that those who are conquered and brought to terms, should be re-attached to us by a kind and forbearing treatment. There is no man in this country who would be less inclined than I to listen to the promptings of vengeance and resentment. But while we are willing to act with a sincere desire to heal all wounds by generous accommodation, do you not see, that before we find a field for that magnanimity in offering terms to the conquered, the rebels must first be conquered and brought to terms ? [Applause.] And do you not further see, that if we follow the Chicago policy, the chance is rather that the rebels will be masters of the situation and bring us to terms ? Still, as the feeling I speak of is vague and indefinite, and may make itself heard independently of the Chicago platform, I will say a word on compromise in its general aspect.

A compromise with the rebellion offered on our part, would necessarily contain two conditions : first, an abandonment of some essential point determined by the national election of 1860, for that was the occasion on which the rebels seceded ; and secondly, the stipulation that the rebels shall give up the struggle and return to their allegiance. Every sensible man who has his eyes open, knows that the rebels will certainly reject a compromise containing the second stipulation as long as they entertain any hope of achieving their independence. The question arises : Would it be good policy to offer the first, even by way of experiment ?

I have already said enough to make it evident that as long as the rebels have confidence in their ability to win ultimate success, they will insist on their terms and not think of accepting ours. We must therefore shake that confidence. How shake it? By a display of superior power, and an inflexible determination to carry on the struggle to the bitter end. That will make them count the cost and consider. But what if we show signs of a flagging spirit, of a shaky determination? What if we act as if we had lost our assurance of our ability to achieve success in the game of war? They will take new hope and courage. And is not an offer of a compromise, that is, an offer to abandon some essential point determined in the election of 1860, an indication of a flagging and uncertain spirit. The matter resolves itself into this: The rebels will not think of accepting a compromise, until their prospects are so obscured and their power so reduced, that they would be obliged to submit without it. Thus it will be no more difficult to beat them into submission, than it will be to beat them into a compromise; and that accomplished, the compromise will be superfluous. But the offer of a compromise before that point is reached, will be not only superfluous but dangerous; for by giving evidence of a flagging of our own spirits, it will bring new courage and hope to the rebels, and thus prolong the struggle and postpone the moment when a settlement can be effected. [Applause.]

But this is not all. I contend that a compromise in our case, even if it could be effected, would be utterly inadmissible as a measure of peace. [Great applause.]

The word compromise has acquired a certain traditional prestige in our political history, so that many people pronounce it with a singular superstitious awe, and think nothing is done well that is not done by compromise. It is said that the Constitution is founded on compromise—



and so it is. But there is one thing in the Constitution, which is not founded upon compromise, which does not admit of any compromise, which is, in the very nature of things, absolute and imperative. It is the principle, that, when the will of the majority upon a question constitutionally subject to be decided by the majority, is once expressed and proclaimed in a Constitutional form, the minority is absolutely and unconditionally bound to submit. [Applause.] There is no cavilling about this principle. It is the very foundation of all republican government; without it the whole republican edifice would at once tumble down as a chaotic, shapeless mass. It is the balance-wheel of the whole machinery. The observance of this principle is the fundamental obligation of the citizen. Every measure of policy may be subject to compromise, but this fundamental obligation is not. It can be bound to no conditions, for if it were, it would cease to be absolute.

Apply this to our case. A Constitutional election was held in 1860. All Constitutional requirements were strictly fulfilled. Abraham Lincoln received a Constitutional majority of the votes; he was made President in a strictly Constitutional manner. And because the majority which elected him entertained certain opinions of public policy obnoxious to a minority, that minority rose in rebellion against the Government. You now propose to buy that rebellious minority back by relinquishing some of the principles held by the majority. You do this, because the minority has risen up in arms against the Constitutionally expressed will of the majority. In other words, you, the majority, confess yourselves so far conquered, as you are willing to surrender part of the decision of the ballot-box to the force of arms. And thus far you declare the fundamental obligation of submission to the Constitutional verdict of the majority not binding; the minority, if it

please, may force the majority to surrender the whole or part of its will. It may do so, for it has succeeded in doing so. The new principle you introduce into our political life is this: the minority is bound by the Constitutional verdict of the majority, unless it be strong enough to force the majority to concessions; then it is not bound; that is to say, elections are not finally decided at the ballot-box, but are afterward open to negotiation; the minority proposes its conditions of submission to the result, and the fighting party wins. Do you know what that means? It means the transformation of the Republic of the United States into something like the old Republics of Mexico and South America; it means the government of revolutionary factions, instead of Constitutional majorities; it means the introduction of rebellion as a standing element in our political life. [Great applause.]

Do not accuse me of seeing spectres. Do not indulge in the vain illusion that this first great abandonment of the fundamental obligation will remain an isolated fact. Such precedents are prolific. Let it be once known that the Constitutional majority can and may be forced to concessions, and the idea will have an irresistible charm to reckless and restless minds. The composition of our people will no longer be what it was heretofore. The end of the war will throw a fearful number of adventurous spirits upon society, ready, at the call of an audacious leader, at any hour, to overleap the bounds of the accustomed order of things. Warlike habits, added to their warlike tastes, will stimulate them to wild enterprises, and a ceaseless war of factions would be to them an all too welcome field of adventure. This is the material, and you know where to look for the leaders. Already, at this moment, the country is teeming with unscrupulous demagogues, with whom treasonable scheming has become a habit; already we hear of large importations of arms and ammunition,

and their distribution among the members of secret organizations; already we see in the papers threats of armed resistance to the loyal majority, in case certain candidates are defeated. And would you be willing to open this flood-gate of disorder by setting aside the only principle, the great fundamental obligation, that keeps democratic government in balance? You would inaugurate a system, which, by compromise and concession, pays and promises a premium to revolt? Is it not astonishing indeed that among men who have such a material stake in social order, as merchants and manufacturers, we should find so many advocates of that fatal policy? And this, they vainly imagine, would lead to peace. The sanctioned violation of the great principle which alone can maintain internal peace, should lead to peace? Is the peace of Mexico and the South American Republics the peace you want? Is a condition of things which will make a revolt as familiar an occurrence as a national election—is that the peace you desire? This, then, is compromise as a peace measure; if it remains a mere experimental offer, encouragement of the rebels and prolongation of the war; if carried into effect, breaking down the great safeguard of social order, and inaugurating an interminable war of factions, but no peace. [Great applause.]

And now give me leave to sum up what I have said about the peace programme of Chicago.

In proposing that the war shall be stopped without making this proposition depend upon any peremptory condition, merely with a view to a thing which everybody knows will not be agreed to, it encourages the rebels to persevere in their resistance.

The result will be, either that the Government, if it falls into the hands of that party, will have to recognize the independence of the Southern Confederacy, or, after a cessation of hostilities, to resume the war.

If it recognizes the independence of the Southern Confederacy, we shall soon have on our hands the complicated and endless wars, which, in the very nature of things, must grow out of disunion.

If the Government, after a cessation of hostilities, resumes the present war for the Union, we shall labor under difficulties immensely greater than at present, for three reasons :

1st. From a cessation of hostilities, such as proposed, the rebels will derive such advantages, and we such disadvantages, that the struggle will be almost hopeless; and still, as peace is impossible with disunion, it will be as necessary as ever.

2d. By declaring before the whole world that the war is a failure; by demanding its cessation on the score of justice, humanity, liberty, and the public welfare; by thus declaring the rebels in the right, and our Government in the wrong; and by thus condemning and virtually abandoning the war for the Union, they invite foreign powers to recognize the rebel Confederacy, and to throw their whole influence against an unjust, inhuman, tyrannical, and universally ruinous war.

3d. By making the foregoing declarations, they turn public opinion in foreign countries against us, and discourage the movements now going on to give us financial aid; and all this while it is certain—and they make it more so—that the war must either be continued after a useless cessation, or be resumed at a more or less distant period.

And, finally, by implicitly advocating a policy of concession to armed rebellion, they propose to set aside the fundamental obligation of submission to the Constitutional will of the majority, to remove the only guarantee of order in democratic life, to pay a premium to revolt,

and thus to open the flood-gates of civil disorder, and a turbulent and endless war of factions.

This is the programme—these its immediate and inevitable results. And the men who thus attempt to create new complications, to increase the difficulties, and thus immensely to aggravate the calamities of war—these men dare to call themselves friends of peace? What! have they not had bloodshed enough, that they want to make this war interminable? Is not the rebellion strong enough, that they want to add to its strength all the aid in money, arms, and material, that foreign friendship can give? Are not our enemies numerous enough, that they want to engage for them the aid of foreign governments? Is not our financial condition embarrassed enough, that they want to stop those resources which open themselves for us abroad? Have we so many friends in the world, that they want to ruin us in the opinion of mankind? What! are they not satiated yet with ruin and desolation? Will it take the sacrifice of new and countless hecatombs of men, the sacrifice of the fruits of another half-century of sweat and toil, to give them their fill? And these men have the brazen front to demand your votes, pretending that they will give you peace! You have heard of shore-pirates who set out false lights by night on the shore of the ocean when the weather is thick and stormy, to deceive and draw on the distressed mariner into the fatal breakers, and then to plunder the ship in pretending to save it. Take heed, Americans, and beware! Trust not this light of peace! This light is false! There is no harbor behind it, nothing but rocks, reefs, breakers, shipwreck, and ruin! [Great applause.]

Such is their cry of peace. But what shall we say of their patriotism? Patriotism, and that platform! If the rebel emissaries at Niagara Falls alone had made it—for they certainly had their share in making it—if the friends



of the rebels in England had made it—that we might understand. But that American citizens—sons of the great and happy Free States—should have made this—can that be conceived by a true American heart?

That platform, and patriotism! Show me the man who hates us most, he will like it best! Show me the bitterest enemy of this Republic, he will crave a chance to vote for it! Show me the vilest villain in all rebeldom, who never prayed before; he will sink upon his knees and pray for its success! [Loud cheers and applause.]

When we want to designate all that was humiliating to our patriotic pride, all that was ruinous to the honor and safety of the Union, all that was contemptible and dastardly and treacherous in the conduct of our public affairs; if we want to designate all this with one name, we call it James Buchanan. [Laughter and applause.]

We thought the period in our history which is represented by that name, was finally absolved; we thought it might be consigned to oblivion, as it was consigned to shame. But, alas! although Buchanan is dead and buried, those who indulged in the soothing delusion that such a man could leave no progeny, find themselves mistaken. Behold, a whole brood of young Buchanans has risen up and met in convention at Chicago. [Continued laughter.] The laurels of their father do not let them sleep. I see again the cunning twinkle of the eye, I see the white necktie again [great laughter]; they try to adjust it like a halter around the throat of the Republic, to throttle her to death. [Continued cheers.] Truly, the sons are greater than the sire. For what he did, we may say he did as a weak old man, whose life had been spent in a constant exercise of his knee-joints; and who, when the rebellion first raised its Gorgon-head, had neither the firmness of a patriot, nor the courage of a traitor. But what they do, they do after thousands of noble men have

stained the battlefields of their country with their precious blood; after the people have poured out their money like water to save the Republic; after our invincible navy has battered down the Southern forts, and is commanding the Southern waters; they do it when the hero of Vicksburg is thundering at the gates of Richmond; when our victorious flag waves over the ramparts of Atlanta, and Victory is the cry! [Long-continued cheering.] Ah! poor old man, hide thy head in shame, for thou canst no longer claim such proud pre-eminence in baseness. There are those that are greater than thou, and whose vaulting ambition laughs thy iniquity to scorn. Those are the men who made that platform! [Tremendous applause.]

And upon that platform they placed a soldier by profession as their candidate—a General who once commanded the armies of this Republic. Was there ever a man more cruelly insulted by his friends? Was there ever irony more cutting. A General nominated for the Presidency for the distinct purpose of trading away other generals' victories! A soldier appointed to make the successes of other soldiers useless! And he did not resent it by flinging platform and nomination into the faces of those who had made it, without losing a single moment! Alas! he did not. He waited. He endured this most outrageous insult—this mortal offence—without saying a word! Meanwhile murmurs of indignation arose, like a black cloud, from the army, against him who was once their commander; from every corner of the country cries of anger and contempt burst forth against the infamous Chicago surrender. But that was not all. A thrill of joy and enthusiasm flashed the heart of the nation when the word came: "Atlanta is ours!" And, then, surrender! [Loud applause.]

But then, at last, when the promptings of prudence

came to the aid of the voice of just resentment—then he spurned the platform, and he scorned to be the candidate of the men that made it, and of the party that adopted it? Oh! no. For him, I regret to say, the opportunity for showing the metal of a great character was lost. He chose a middle way. He did not repudiate, nor did he approve, but he ignored the platform and took the nomination. This has, at least, the charm of novelty. The candidate wrote a skilfully worded political letter, showing that the art, How not to say it, can be brought to as high a degree of perfection as the art, How not to do it. [Laughter and cheers.] It is upon record. But that was not the first political letter of his life. The General had written one about a year ago, before he was a candidate. That letter was endorsing the principles and advocating the election of Judge Woodward to the Governorship of Pennsylvania. And that letter is on record, too. Who was Judge Woodward? You know better than I can tell you, that he went as far as any of the class called peace-copperheads dared to go; peace at any price, surrender, and all. And when was this letter endorsing such principles written? The circumstances are significant. We had just then suffered a very disastrous defeat at the battle of Chickamauga; our Western army was in a most critical situation; in Virginia the campaign had come to a complete stand-still; the affairs of the country looked dark. And then the General endorsed the principles and advocated the election of a peace-man. This is most interesting for the people to remember. Thus we know how he is capable of speaking after a defeat. This gives us the advantage, since he has now somewhat changed his tune after a victory, to conclude with safety how he is likely to speak in case of a defeat again. It is far from me to insinuate that the General was dishonest in writing his war-letter; nor was he dishonest in writing his letter for the peace-

man. He means what he says now; he meant what he said then. The General is a gentleman, and I sincerely believe he was honest both times. [Laughter and applause.] But this kind of honesty is a fair indication of the policy we may look for from that quarter. While I detest that sort of peace-spirit, I am afraid of that sort of war-spirit. And this is the war-spirit of a party which deemed it necessary to postpone its Convention from the Fourth of July to the twenty-ninth of August, to give events time to develop themselves, and to shape their policy accordingly. [Cheers.]

For peace when the horizon of the country is gloomy, and for war when it is bright! Is that the kind of patriotism we want? This fair-weather patriotism, which is ready to give up the country in the hour of misfortune, although it makes a show of standing by the country in the hour of success? And upon that shifting sandhill you will build the future of the Republic? [Great cheering.] What, if to-morrow an untoward accident should overtake our armies; will it stand the test, or will it give up the country again? Remember, that it is in the hour of gloom and despondency that the country stands most in need of the unswerving devotion of her sons! [Loud applause.] Give me the man, who, in storm as well as in sunshine, amidst the cries of distress as well as the jubilee of victory, will stand by the cause of his country with a faith unshaken, with a courage undismayed, with a purpose unbending, and him I will call a patriot; but not him whose firmness depends upon the revolutions of the wheel of fortune! [Enthusiastic cheering.]

And this kind of firmness will have to stand a singular test. We shall have the alarming spectacle of an honest, but not altogether inflexible, character in very bad company. There is no American who does not know that a President's policy is not made by him alone, but by those

who made him; and there is no American who will forget that the strength of the vote which nominated this candidate at Chicago was far exceeded by the unanimity with which the platform was adopted. And now ignore the platform, and take the nomination? In ancient tales we read of men who, in order to enjoy all the good things of the world, pledged their souls to the devil by compact; and they did enjoy the good things of this world, but then played the virtuous in order to save their souls; but at the appointed time, the devil produced the compact signed with blood, and claimed and took the forfeit. And this Presidential candidate thinks he can enjoy the good things of this world, and then, by playing the virtuous, cheat the devil out of his dues? [Laughter and cheers.] Vain undertaking! This devil will be too much for the man who wrote the Woodward-letter, and either the good things of this world will not be enjoyed, or the forfeit will be claimed and taken! [Loud cheers and applause.]

No, no, this is no jest! I am in sober earnest, and mean what I say. Either that party must go to pieces, or it must be held together by bargain and sale. If it goes to pieces, well and good; the smaller the pieces, the better. [Laughter and cheers.] But if it be held together by bargain and sale, what is the price at which the support of the surrender-men can be secured? What assurances, what secret pledges must be given? And you know well enough that those old party-leaders are not the men who work merely for the gratification of another man's ambition!

How will it be when the leaders of the surrender-party press around the throne and claim the forfeit? Will the new War-President then lean for strength upon his brother Pendleton, that most abject and submissive of all Surrender-Democrats? [Laughter and cheers.]



How magnificent a combination would be this: Horatio Seymour as Secretary of State and chief of the circumlocution office; Seymour, of Connecticut, as Secretary of the Navy; Vallandigham as Secretary of War; and Fernando Wood, in consideration of the peculiar lustre which his honesty sheds upon his talents, Secretary of the Treasury. [Peals of laughter.] And would such a combination, if bargain as a last refuge be resorted to, would it be more wonderful than the harmony of the Chicago Convention? Is not the support of all of them necessary?

No, no, I am not jesting. If the party be held together, and the Cabinet should be a complete Pandemonium, there would be nothing surprising in it. Such arrangements have been seen before, when things were working smoothly, and when there was no apparent conflict between platform and candidate. How, then, may it be now, when the necessities of the party are so pressing that they must resort to extreme remedies to save it? [Cheers.]

Méanwhile, you will see them walk from voter to voter and say, "Are you for war? So are we, my friend; here is our candidate!" or, "Are you for peace? So are we, my friend; here is our platform!" only in one thing treating all alike: in deceiving each other, and in deceiving all! For when they say, "We are for war," may not the answer be, "You lie, for here is your platform!" Or, when they say, "We are for peace," may not the answer be, "You lie, for here is your candidate!" [Cheers and applause.]

Americans, what a spectacle is this! How sad, how loathsome an exhibition! And it is in this way that a great nation is to decide of its future! In this gulf of deception and duplicity you would sink the fortunes of your country? From my inmost heart, from the very

depth of my profoundest convictions, I warn you. Out of this, nothing can grow but a peace that can not last, or a war that will not end; a peace without honor and solidity, or a war without faith, without nerve, without success, without decision. [Great applause.]

It is with a sense of relief that I turn from this fearful labyrinth of confused contradictions, of dark arrangements, of continually shifting pretences, to another programme of peace policy, which has at least the merit of consistency in its principles, of unyielding firmness in its policy, and of straightforward clearness in its propositions. It is the platform of the great Union party. [Applause.] Let us examine the wisdom of its policy with a view to the restoration of peace. Its first resolution reads thus:

*Resolved*, That it is the highest duty of every American citizen to maintain against all their enemies the integrity of the Union and the paramount authority of the Constitution and laws of the United States; and that, laying aside all differences and political opinions, we pledge ourselves as Union men, animated by a common sentiment, and aiming at a common object, to do everything in our power to aid the Government in quelling by force of arms the rebellion now raging against its authority, and in bringing to the punishment due to their crimes the rebels and traitors arrayed against it."

This, at least, is clear and definite. There are no "ifs" nor "buts." Starting from the conviction that disunion will bring on interminable conflicts, and that, if, in the interest of peace alone, the Union must, absolutely *must* be restored—and only our enemies abroad, and traitors at home doubt that—and that the rebels will not consent to reunion unless the victories of our army and navy bring them to terms—and only fools doubt that—it is

affirmed that there is nothing left to us but to seek peace by a resort to arms, by vigor and energy in its prosecution of the war, and by a faithful and devoted support of the Government in its efforts to secure a speedy and decisive victory. This we explicitly declare to be the sense of the *loyal* American people. [Applause.] Not one of the points we have won is given up; not one step is taken backward; not one advantage gained is jeopardized by a prevaricative policy; and while the Democratic promise of armistice and premature concession, by exhibiting a flagging spirit and a vacillating purpose, can only serve to encourage the rebels to persevere in their resistance, our inflexible determination will make them count the cost; and if the Southern people are really tired of the war, if they really want peace, they will at last have to make up their minds, once for all, that they cannot get rid of this war, with its burdens and its sacrifices, unless they buy peace at the only price at which it can be bought, the restoration of the Union.

And, moreover, this declaration will make European governments understand that we do not consider this war a failure, nor that we mean to make it so; and that, if they should conclude to give the rebellion countenance and aid and comfort, they will never succeed in changing our unalterable determination; but may, indeed, succeed in pressing our resentment beyond the limits of mere remonstrance. [Cheers.] And as to our detractors abroad, who are so anxious for peace and the cessation of bloodshed, but still more anxious for the breaking up of this Republic; who, when some disaster has befallen us, so blandly endeavor to persuade us that now it is time to stop, that now we can endure it no longer, that after all separation would be best for both parties—they omit to speak of third and fourth parties—and that our own welfare would be best promoted by consenting to it without unnecessary

delay, and who, when, in spite of their magnanimous advice, we steadily work on, show their little humor by accusing us of heartlessness and barbarism, flavoring their urgencies from time to time with a dark rumor of foreign intervention; by this declaration we give them to understand, once for all, that they might as well bridle their tender solicitude; that the American people are not acting upon the rash impulse of passion, but upon convictions broad and deep; that, according to those convictions, a lasting peace is impossible with disunion; that, therefore, whatever sacrifice it may cost, the Union must be restored and will be restored; that this is our set purpose, and that they are not smart enough to coax us out of it, and, we humbly suspect, not formidable enough to frighten us out of it. [Great applause.]

And, finally, this declaration will give an assurance to our friends abroad, who are generously willing to give us their moral and financial aid, that considerations of justice, humanity, liberty and the public welfare urge us, not to stop the war and abandon our purpose, but to work on with increased vigor and unbending perseverance; that we have faith in the justice of our cause, and confidence in the final result; that our friends being true to us, we shall be true to them; that they not only will be protected against their aid becoming a sacrifice, but will once have the satisfaction of having contributed to the success of the greatest cause of this century. [Great cheering.]

And now I appeal to you, Union men, and I appeal to you also, Democrats, is this, or is it not, the only policy worthy of the great American people? Answer! ["Aye! Aye!"]

But here we do not stop. The rebellion being beaten down, the rebels being obliged to keep peace for the present by the utter exhaustion of their forces, peace must be secured for the future. The Union party presents for this object another resolution. It reads thus:

*“Resolved, That we approve the determination of the Government of the United States not to compromise with rebels, or to offer any terms of peace, except such as may be based upon an ‘unconditional surrender’ of their hostility, and a return to their just allegiance to the Constitution and laws of the United States, and that we call upon the Government to maintain this position, and to prosecute the war with the utmost possible vigor to the complete suppression of the rebellion, in full reliance upon the self-sacrifice, the patriotism, the heroic valor, and the undying devotion of the American people to their country and its free institutions.”*

While we all agree that hatred and resentment ought to have no share in the final settlement of our differences, it is declared that the lawful authority of the Government must be vindicated in such a manner as to leave the fundamental obligations of the citizens toward it no longer in doubt. In other words: Here is the press; here is the public meeting; here are our legislative assemblies, State and national; here are the courts of justice—if you have a matter of principle or of policy to discuss, to defend, to carry, there are the means to discuss, to defend, to carry it. If you succeed, well and good. If you fail, you must try again by the same means, or give up. But whoever rises in rebellion against the will of the majority, Constitutionally expressed, must be brought to submit to it unconditionally, so that every man, woman, and child throughout this broad land may know that *nothing, nothing at all, can be made* by forcibly resisting that will. This point once sternly, inflexibly established, no man will henceforth be tempted to embark in an enterprise which is so perilous and also so hopeless. [Cheers.]

But the peace of the Republic must not rest upon submission alone: it must be placed upon a solid foundation, by securing the hearty co-operation of the now rebellious



people in the future development of the restored Union. Then, indeed, peace will be perfect. And this great object is subserved by another proposition submitted by the Union party. It is this:

*“Resolved, That as slavery was the cause, and now constitutes the strength of this rebellion, and as it must be always and everywhere hostile to the principles of republican government, justice and the national safety demand its utter and complete extirpation from the soil of the Republic, and that we uphold and maintain the acts and proclamations by which the Government, in its own defence, has aimed a death-blow at this gigantic evil. We are in favor, furthermore, of such an amendment to the Constitution to be made by the people in conformity with its provisions, as shall terminate and for ever prohibit the existence of slavery within the limits of the jurisdiction of the United States.”* [Tremendous cheering.]

The abolition of slavery was urged upon us — first, as a measure of justice by the great laws of the universe; second, as a war measure, by the necessities of our situation; and third, as the great measure of reconciliation, by the necessity of placing our internal peace upon the basis of political, social, and economical harmony. To discuss it as a measure of justice, or as a war measure, is not my object at present; but discussing it as a peace measure, I boldly assert, that there is nothing that can bring about sincere, hearty, and lasting reconciliation but the abolition of slavery. [Applause.]

First, then, as to harmony in our political system: Was it not the profound and eternal antagonism between slavery and the fundamental principles of our policy, that brought forth the strife which at last resulted in open rebellion? The friends of despotism in the old world were in the habit of sneering at our democratic experiment, and of predicting its failure; and when the rebellion broke

out, they exulted over us and said, that the experiment had already failed. They exulted too soon. The experiment was not in danger of failure because our political system was democratic, but because there was one element in it which was anti-democratic, and that rebelled against the rest. They have indeed exulted over us too soon; for we cast out the unclean spirit, we place the democratic experiment upon the course of a consistent, harmonious, and healthful development, and its success will be surer than ever. [Loud cheering.]

Secondly, as to social and economical harmony. What is it that the non-slaveholders of the South, the overwhelming majority of the Southern people, are fighting for? Not their own interests, but the interests and aspirations of the slaveholding aristocracy. This aristocracy, by its wealth and superior spirit and intelligence, hold the non-slaveholding majority in a moral subjection, little less absolute than that of the slaves themselves. And upon what does that aristocratic superiority rest? Upon the system of slavery. Destroy slavery, and you will emancipate, not only the blacks, but the whites also. [Loud cheers.] In the place of the great aspiration of slavery, which is dominion, you will place the great aspiration of free labor, which is equality; for the equality of the citizen is nothing but the recognized dignity of free labor. [Great applause.] The yoke once lifted, the Southern people once emancipated, they will not let a broken-down aristocracy think for them, but they will think for themselves, like freemen; they will have the aspirations of freemen, centred in truly free institutions, which are to be found in the Union. Their new dignity and their new aspirations will demand the school-house, and the school-house will make them look back with contempt upon their former wretchedness, and open the charms of new prospects and a new activity full to their view. These new prospects, this

future of independence, self-reliance, and self-respect, will make them forget the past, in which there was nothing but degradation. Nor is this all.

The downfall of slavery will open the road to property to the poor laboring man. Slavery was a huge insatiable land-eater. Slavery abolished, the great landed estates, based upon and supported by slave labor, will go to pieces, and the pieces will fall into the hands of the poor laboring man. Instead of the grand palatial mansion, surrounded with miserable negro cabins, and instead of the wretched hovel inhabited by the poor white, we shall soon see the neat white cottage in the midst of small but flourishing fields, and the interior of that cottage will be adorned not with the bowie-knife and pistol, but with the book-case and every evidence of progressive civilization. This will go quickly as thought, for the Southern people will not be left to work out that development alone. Thousands and thousands of Northern men, who but recently had been roaming over that country with sword and bayonet, and on that occasion had made the discovery of the South, will invade it again with spade and plough, and machinery, and capital, and knowledge, and a spirit of progressive improvement. These invaders will be the peaceable neighbors of the invaded, and each one will work for the other in working for himself; and all will be one people. Thus the Southern people will be reorganized, regenerated by the emancipation of the large majority from the rule of a powerful few. Then the acrimony of the rebellion will be blotted out even to the remembrance; the people will no longer have time to think of the differences of an unfortunate past, for they will have to think of the problems of a busy present and a hopeful future. [Cheers.]

But what of the late slave-lord? Will he forget his rancor also? What if he does not? His class was always weak in numbers, and the system which made it powerful

in society is gone. Some of the once mighty cavaliers will sullenly sink in the flood, and their fossil remains, flattened and petrified, will be found, like those of the antediluvian mastodon, between the strata of the new social organization. [Cheers.] Curious geologists will dig them out, and the children of the South will wonder how such monstrous animals could ever have existed. [Loud applause.] But others will save themselves in the ark of the free-labor system. They will in time see the wisdom of accommodating themselves to the new order of things, and find out at last that it is better to be an equal among freemen than to be the master, and at the same time the slave of slaves. [Applause.] And presently the South will bloom like the bursting bud of a flower. The immense resources of the soil will, as by enchantment, spring to light under the magic touch of free labor, and her riches will be enjoyed by a free, happy, and—who doubts it?—*loyal* people. And then will come the great day when the people of the regenerated South will stretch their hands across the Ohio and the Potomac and say: “Blessed be you, brethren of the North! We “were sick and wretched, and you have made us well! “Not only our slaves, but we also were in bondage, and “you have broken our fetters!” [Loud cheers.]

This will be peace and reconciliation indeed; a reconciliation in obedience to the great moral laws of the universe and to the progressive spirit of our age; a peace founded upon harmonious co-operation, mutual benefit, and good-will to all men. Such must be, and such only can be, the internal peace of the Union. [Cheers.]

This, then, is the peace-programme of the Union party: Peace won by force of arms, maintained by an inflexible vindication of the majesty of the people, and fortified in the hearts of the people by the greatest reform of our century, founded upon justice to all.

This settlement will secure order, for it fetters the spirit of rebellion by enforcing the fundamental obligation of the citizen; it will secure liberty, for it will cast out the demon which attempted its overthrow; it will secure prosperity and happiness, for it will throw open resources, hitherto untouched or wasted, to the unfettered genius of the American people, and extend the benefit of popular education into the darkest corner of the country. But it will do more. *This settlement will prepare this Republic for that power and greatness among the nations of the earth, to which a manifest destiny points its finger.*

Lord John Russell once defined the American war, as the South fighting for independence, and the North fighting for empire. I accept the word. Aye, the South is fighting for independence; aye, we are fighting for empire, and for empire, too, on the very grandest of scales! [Loud cheers.] It is so, and it cannot be otherwise.

What is the independence the South is fighting for? Look at it. It is the rending asunder of what naturally belongs together; it is the breaking up of a great Republic which promised to throw its peaceful shield over untold millions; it is the establishment of a Confederacy on the corner-stone of the most hideous abomination of the age; it is the introduction of incessant strife and all the desolations of internal war, where there might have been the abode of happy repose and civilizing industry; it is the necessity of turning a large proportion of the social forces, which might have all been devoted to the pursuit of moral and material improvement, to the savage and tyrannical pursuit of attack and defence; it is the destruction of free institutions; it is the interruption of progressive civilization; it is the ceaseless and bloody struggle of factions, instead of the tranquil government of public opinion; it is restless weakness, instead of peaceful,



national strength ; it is the contempt of the world, instead of its admiration ; it is the poor and oppressed of the world robbed of their asylum ; it is a great young nation robbed of a great and happy future. Such is the breaking up of this Republic ; such is Southern independence. [Applause.]

And what is the empire we are fighting for ? It is, indeed, not a state, with an emperor at its head ; it is, indeed, not like the empire of the Romans of old, or of Great Britain in India, who subjugated nations, and coined the sweat and tears of the oppressed into gold ; it is, indeed, not like that of the first Napoleon, who placed his brothers and minions upon the thrones of ruined states, and threw his iron fingers like a vice around the throats of conquered nations. But look at this : here is a country of three millions three hundred thousand square miles, nearly two millions of which are capable of a high order of agricultural improvement ; a country washed by the two great oceans on the east and west, and intersected by the most magnificent rivers and strings of lakes ; a country able to support more than a thousand millions of inhabitants. This is the geographical character of the empire we are fighting for. And now as to the people. This country contains over thirty millions to-day, and by an estimate far below the ratio of increase established during the last seven decades, it will contain one hundred millions in fifty years, and five hundred millions in a century — and elbow-room for many more. And for the untold millions that are to inhabit it, we hold this country as a sacred trust ; to them we have to transmit the foundations upon which they can build their peace, prosperity, civilization, and power. We will transmit to them institutions free from the vices and encumbrances of which European nations vainly strive to deliver themselves ; free from the necessity of large and dangerous standing

armies; free from that pernicious centralization of power which springs from the dangers occasioned by the close proximity of powerful and hostile neighbors; free from the blight of an aristocracy, and free from the curse of slavery. [Loud applause.] We will transmit to them liberty and equal rights, secured by laws respectable and respected; we will transmit to them a social organization in which every human being can enjoy the fruits of his labor with dignity and independence; we will transmit to them a full abundance of the means which promote the untrammelled development of the moral and ideal element in human nature. We will transmit to them an untarnished national honor; we will transmit to them a power under whose shield the oppressed of the world will feel secure, and whose flag no king or combination of kings will dare to touch. These blessings we will transmit to them in the frame of a Federal Constitution, the national form of self-government, elastic enough for ever so many hundred millions of citizens, leaving every individual, and every community free to work out their own progressive development in their own acknowledged spheres, while binding all together in a bond of strength. In one word, we mean to build up a Republic, greater, more populous, freer, more prosperous, and more powerful than any state history tells us of; a Republic having within itself all that can make a people great, good, and happy, and being so strong, that its pleasure will be consulted before any power on earth will undertake to disturb the peace of the world. [Loud cheering.] This, my Lord John Russell, is the Empire we are fighting for, and this Empire we mean to have. [Great applause.]

The nations of old Europe stand aghast and look with silent terror and amazement at the Titanic grapple, at

this life-or-death struggle between the Roundheads and the Cavaliers of America, between the army of the future and the army of the past. They have seen us surprised by a gigantic and well-organized rebellion, as by a thief in the night: we had no army, no navy, no arms, no war-funds in the Treasury; they have seen us create army and navy out of nothing in the twinkling of an eye, and the people pouring out their untold millions of money, as if it had not cost a drop of sweat to earn them. They have seen defeat come upon us with such stunning force, that the nation seemed to reel under the blow. And they cried "failure," as now the allies of our enemies here are crying "failure." But then they saw this nation quietly gather up its strength, and like the silent waves of the ocean roll against the bulwarks of rebellion. Another repulse equally stunning, and "failure" again, but again the wave rolls on with increased and tremendous momentum. And so they see the fearful game sway to and fro, disaster set at defiance with grim stubbornness, victory wrung from the grasp of an unwilling fortune, until at last the Mississippi is ours, until the Atlantic coast is fringed with our conquests, until the glorious Farragut [great cheering] has battered down the forts of Mobile, and swept the Southern waters, until the restless Sherman has dug his bloody way into the heart of Georgia [continued cheering], and until the indomitable Grant, whose unbending mind, insensible to disaster, is doggedly clinging to the heels of victory, has laid his iron hand upon the ramparts of Richmond. [Tremendous applause.] And old Europe asks: "Are they not tired yet?" See here, old Europe; this is the fourth year of the war. All rebeldom is swept clean by a merciless conscription. The President of the United States calls again for half a million of men, and from all hills and valleys resounds

the old song, "We are coming, we are coming!" and over five thousand men a day volunteer for the bloody work of achieving their country's destiny. [Great applause.]

Europe does not understand this inexhaustible perseverance, this bull-dog tenacity. Europe does not know the American. She looks upon him as a cold, dry, matter-of-fact creature, whose soul is filled to its full capacity with business calculations and the mean cares of everyday life. Europe is mistaken. There is a profound idealism in the soul of the American, which breaks forth in its full force only on great occasions. The American *believes* in the great destiny of his country, believes in it with that unconquerable, immovable, religious, fanatic faith, to which the greatness of the difficulties to be overcome appears as nothing compared with the greatness of the object to be achieved. This faith lives not only in the head of the man of thought and far-seeing speculation; it hovers over the plough of the farmer, over the anvil of the mechanic, over the desk of the merchant; it is the very milk with which the American mother nourishes her baby. This faith has put our armies into the field and set our navy afloat; as in France every soldier is said to carry the marshal's baton in his knapsack, so in America the smallest cabin-lad of the fleet, the meanest drummer-boy in the field, carries in his soul the great ideal of his country's destiny. [Great cheering.] This faith knows no failure, and if it be staggered a moment by the blow of unexpected misfortune, it bounds up again the next moment with a wonderful recuperative power. No, this faith knows no failure; for it no sacrifice is too great, before its onset impossibility yields its stubbornness. The rebellion itself could not shake it; no, by the rebellion it has grown in intensity. The rebellion has suddenly lifted

this nation from her childhood. Having gone through struggles, the tremendous shocks of which not many States would have been able to endure, this nation now stands there with the inspiring consciousness of mature strength. She did not know before how strong she was, but now she knows; and whatever trials may be in store for her, fear and weakness will have no seat at her council-board. And with proud confidence she looks forward to the day, when the united power of North and South will rally again under the common banner of liberty, and when it will be a question of first interest to foreign powers, how far, during this war, they have provoked the resentment of the American people. [Tremendous cheering.] Meanwhile, guided by her great faith as by a column of fire by night and a column of cloud by day, the nation marches forth to do or die for the grand republican empire of the future.

And this great republican empire of the future is no idle dream, no mere empty hallucination of a heated brain. The stupendous prospect is opened by patent fact and the demonstrations of reason. This Republic cannot but be great, if it is one; but there can be nothing but strife, weakness, and decay, if it be divided. The questions of peace, empire, national existence, liberty, prosperity, civilization—all these questions are one and inseparable. In the very nature of things, this Republic must be great or it must die. There is no other alternative. The great republican empire is there, it is within your grasp, if you only remain true to the idea.

And now hear me, Americans of to-day, and mark my words: In the peace which you are now struggling for, you will lay the foundation of this future greatness, or you will lay in it the seeds of decay, disease, and death. Whatever you may have achieved, you have done nothing



if you will not do more. [Great applause.] This is the turning-point of your development; this is the moment of the final decision; this is the great opportunity. Take care how you use it. It will never, never come back. Woe to the statesman who now conceives a plan, or cherishes a sympathy, that is not in accordance with this great development. Woe to the party that now tries to lure the people from the glorious path. Woe to the people if at this solemn moment they mistake their duty to themselves and to future generations. It is with her life that the nation would have to pay for the fatal error. [Loud applause.]

Not to the rebels will I appeal. The slave lords, fighting for institutions which are condemned by the unanimous voice of enlightened humanity, have set their hearts upon reviving what is dead, and the voice of reason and argument cannot pierce their fatal infatuation; and their retinue follows them like a flock of sheep. Let them fulfil the destiny they have made for themselves. Let the dead bury their dead. [Applause.]

Nor will I appeal to those degenerate sons of the North who have openly allied themselves with the enemies of their country; who rejoice over her disasters and grieve over her victories. They present one of those singular examples of human depravity, which must be seen in order to be believed. That a son should mock a benignant mother, when she is weeping tears of agony and distress; that her smile of pride and happiness should make him sad—that can hardly be explained upon any psychological theory. It shows a depth of moral perversity so deep and dark, that the ordinary understanding cannot sound it, and that even the creative power of imagination stands baffled. When I see such a man, I feel myself overcome by a feeling of profound pity; pity for a soul

that has closed itself against those great and generous emotions which would unite it in joy and grief with so many thousand kindred souls, pity for the sullen miseries of a barren heart. But to reason with them would be in vain, for we cannot follow them into the sombre and tangled mazes of their motives. We must leave them to the infamy they have chosen for themselves. [Loud applause.]

But to you, whose hearts are still open to the entreaties of your hopefully struggling country, but whose eyes are clouded by party spirit, or by the false pride of preconceived opinions, or by little resentments, to you I address this last appeal. There is the great destiny of your Republic; the warmest enthusiasm of your hearts for it cannot be too fiery, your deepest prayers for it cannot be too pressing. You see it before you. The means by which it can be achieved I have pointed out to you; no, not that, I have only reminded you of them, for your own common sense, your own experience, the unanimous opinion of this century, your own consciences, point them out. These means are powerful, but plain, direct, and simple; and in their grand directness and simplicity worthy of the tremendous object to be achieved. And now you come with your puny tricks and shifts of compromise? Now, you can find comfort for your souls in the pusillanimous, dangerous, pernicious expedient of the weak and shaky, to do things by halves? Now, you can parade petty grievances before the world and raise the silly cry of despotism, a cry so silly that those who raise it cannot meet each other in the street without smiling? Now, in the face of this tremendous stake, you resort to your little cunning contrivances to confuse the minds of the people, merely to gain an advantage for a party? Now, you cannot set your heel upon the contemptible ranklings of per-

sonal disappointment or the groveling animosity of minor differences of opinion? Now, you insist upon being small when the country expects every one of her sons to rise to the height of her own destiny? Now, when the fate of the Republic stands upon the brink of the most fearful decision, a decision which will be irrevocable for ever? Party! Have you not learned yet that in times of a great crisis there can be only a *for* and *against*, and that all which is half this and half that must be ground to dust as between two mill-stones? [Loud applause.] Have you not learned that lesson in the contest of 1860? Then you will learn it now, when your organization is crumbling to pieces like a rotten stick, dangerous for him who leans upon it; crumbling to pieces in spite of artful duplicity, in spite of trade and bargain. This is not a mere accident; it is the inexorable logic of things. [Applause.] And out of this disgraceful shipwreck you can hesitate to save the proud privilege of being useful to your country? Not I alone entreat you thus. Hear the voice of him, who leads your sons and brothers on the field of battle: "The end is near; only let the North be true to herself! Unity of sentiment and unity of action, and victory is sure!" And not he alone. Every sigh and moan of the wounded soldier, every drop of blood that stains our battle-fields, every tear that moistens the pale cheeks of our widows and orphans, cries out to you: "Take care that this be not in vain. Unite for the struggle!" [Applause.]

But, believe me, it is not from fear of failure that I appeal to you. I appeal to you that your names may not go down to your children on the suspicious list of the doubtful. I wish that the country might be proud of all her sons.

Indeed, whatever you may do, we fear you not; for,

although only glorious New England has spoken [great cheering], I solemnly declare my belief that the people have already decided in their hearts. This nation will not be false to her great destiny. You try in vain to stop her march by throwing yourselves under her feet. Come with her if you will, or she will march over you if she must. [Long-continued and tremendous applause.] In every pulsation of the popular heart, in every breeze there is victory; and in the midst of the din and confusion of the conflict there stands the NATIONAL WILL, undisturbed, in monumental repose, and gives his quiet command: FOR THE GREAT EMPIRE OF LIBERTY, FORWARD! [Long-continued cheers and applause, and waving of hats.]

## XI.

### THE TREASON OF SLAVERY.

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SPEECH DELIVERED AT THE ACADEMY OF MUSIC,  
BROOKLYN, ON THE 7TH OF OCTOBER, 1864.

*The meeting at which this speech was delivered was one of the great and brilliant campaign meetings arranged by the Union men of Brooklyn. The reader will remember that, although nothing was said about slavery in the Democratic platform of 1864, Democratic papers and orators were in the habit of accusing the administration of Mr. Lincoln and the Union party of carrying on the war exclusively for the benefit of the negro, and of having thus diverted the war from its original and legitimate object. This circumstance induced the speaker to adopt the line of argument followed in this speech.*

MR. PRESIDENT AND FELLOW-CITIZENS:—

To ascribe great effects to small, far-fetched, and merely incidental causes, is a manner of explaining historical events which weak minds pass off, and weaker minds take, as an evidence of superior sagacity. Even in those cases where individuals are powerful enough to produce great commotions on their own private motives, such an historical theory is but rarely admissible; but where a nation acts upon the impulses of the popular heart, it is never so. There are those who find the cause of the downfall of the Roman Republic in the financial embarrassments of some of her ambitious men. There are those who find the origin of the great religious Reformation of the sixteenth century in the desire of some German ecclesiastics



to get married. There are those who tell us that the French Revolution would never have happened but for the secret organization of the Free Masons. Such ridiculous exhibitions of human ingenuity might amuse us had they not frequently exercised a most dangerous influence upon the actions of large classes of people; for even in our days there are those who pretend to find the origin of the great struggle which is now convulsing this country, in a few anti-slavery tracts circulated by a few abolitionists from New England; and what is worse, there are many who believe it; and what is still worse, there are many who are prepared to act upon that belief.

True, the first origin of great developments is sometimes apparently small, but only apparently so. It requires an acorn fallen from an oak tree to make another oak tree grow. Ever so large a quantity of mustard-seed will never do it. And even an acorn will not, if it falls upon a rock.

In order to make clear to our minds the true nature of the struggle in which we are engaged, you must suffer me to look back upon the original composition of American society. The men who established the first settlements in New England were almost all plebeians—true children of the people. They had not abandoned their old homes merely for the purpose of seeking in the wilds of the new world a material fortune, which the old world had refused them. They were the earnest champions of a principle, and they left their native shores because there that principle was persecuted and oppressed. They sought and found upon the rocky soil of New England a place where they could conform their social condition to their religious belief. Equal in their origin and social standing, inspired by the same motives, engaged with equal interest in the same enterprise, pursuing the same ends, and sharing the same fortunes—their instincts, however crudely developed,

were necessarily all democratic. Their natural tendency was not to produce in the new world a social inequality, which in the old world had heavily weighed upon them but had never existed among themselves. Every institution they founded had in view the equality of the citizens, and by originating a system of public education for *all* the children of the people, they endeavored to perpetuate that equality which originally was the characteristic feature of their society. It is true, there was a great variety in their occupations: agriculture, handicraft, commerce, industry, learned professions; but all these occupations being equally respectable, they produced no permanent distinctions in society; for, what one might be, another might become. Equality, and the democratic spirit arising from it, was the basis of their whole social and political organization. These tendencies they and their descendants carried all over the Northern States, and although the Puritans gradually dropped most of their religious and social peculiarities, and although they, as a race, became largely intermingled with other classes of people, yet those original tendencies pervaded the whole social and political system as a powerful leaven, and thus determined the character of Northern society and civilization.

This is the spirit to which the North owes her thrift and industry, her education, her liberty, her progressive enterprise, her prosperity, and her greatness. [Applause.]

It was not so with the original settlers of the Southern country, especially Virginia. Some of them were scions of the noble houses of England; they belonged to the privileged class at home. They went to the new country, those that were rich and powerful, in order to increase their wealth and power, and those that were poor and insignificant, in order to gain in the new world what they had been vainly striving to find in the old. All were seeking new fortunes upon a new field of action. Such

were the Cavaliers; and those who followed them were not permitted to forget here the difference of station which had separated them from their patrons at home. The aristocratic gradations of European society, naturally modified by the necessities of American life, were as much as possible imitated, or rather retained, and the general tendency of things was more favorable to the preservation than to the abolition of social distinctions. This manifested itself clearly in the business enterprises of the new world aristocracy. Large landed estates were formed, the cultivation of which required the labor of a vast number of subordinates. Various ways were devised in which this labor could be made obligatory; a peculiar system of white serfdom was attempted, and everything seemed to concur in making the superiority of the few over the many an hereditary and permanent institution. This tendency fixed the character of Southern society and civilization. This is the spirit to which the South owes her domestic tyranny, her lack of enterprise, the poverty and ignorance of her masses, the slowness of her progress. [Applause.]

It is probable—nay, it is almost certain—that the aristocratic character of Southern society would have been unable to maintain itself, and to impress its mark permanently upon their political institutions, had not the importation of a class of persons, of whom it was taken for granted that they had to labor, not for themselves, but for others, furnished a welcome expedient.

But for the introduction of negro slavery, the aristocratic landholders of the South would not have succeeded in fastening upon any class of people the burden of obligatory labor; aristocracy would have lost its foundation, and been obliged to yield to the democratic spirit natural to the inhabitants of a new country. But in negro slavery it found a congenial element; slavery was the soil which

nourished and fostered and sustained the roots of aristocracy against the democratic breeze.

I may remark here, by the way, that by tracing the aristocratic tendency of Southern society back to the Cavaliers who founded the settlements in Virginia, I do not mean to admit the ridiculous claim of the latter-day chivalry, that they are a superior race of people and have all sorts of noble blood in their veins. Society became somewhat mixed, and among the proudest slave-barons of to-day, there are certainly a good many descendants of men who, if England had to dispose of them again, would be sent to Botany Bay instead of Virginia; while other Southern nobles may run up their pedigree to some speculative Yankee pedlar. [Great applause and laughter.]

What I mean to say is, that the character of the original settlers determined the character of the social and political institutions, while subsequently these institutions in their turn determined the character of the inhabitants. I am also well aware that political doctrines were cultivated in the two groups of colonies and States which apparently contradict this representation, but only apparently, for in democracies practice frequently goes ahead of theory, while in aristocracies frequently theories are cherished, the full realization of which would greatly disturb the society which cherishes them.

Thus we trace in the first stages of American history two distinct currents, one running in the direction of social and political equality, and the other in the direction of permanent social and political distinctions—the one essentially democratic, the other essentially aristocratic. These currents were running smoothly side-by-side as long as they were kept asunder by the separate colonial governments. But they became directly antagonistic as soon as, by the organization of the different colonies into one republic, a field of common problems was opened to

them where they had to meet. Then the question arose, which of the two currents should determine the character of the future development of the American Republic?—and this question, meanwhile expanded to gigantic dimensions, is the one we have been so warmly discussing these forty or fifty years, and which we are now about to decide. [Applause.]

Pardon me for having commenced my speech with the Pilgrim Fathers and the first settlers of Virginia. I desired to show that William Lloyd Garrison and Gerrit Smith are not altogether responsible for the great rebellion. And if you give me leave I will proceed to show that the Republican party is not altogether responsible for that event either. [Applause.] I may then arrive at some conclusions having a direct bearing upon the burning questions we have at present to solve.

The struggle against Great Britain commenced, and the two great elements, the democratic and aristocratic, went harmoniously together. They had one great common problem to solve—that was the problem of the first historical period of the American people, the achievement of political independence, the foundation of the new American nationality, and the defence of that incipient nationality against its enemies abroad. While struggling together for that common object, they had every conceivable inducement for going hand-in-hand. The natural antagonism had as yet but imperfectly disclosed itself. And, indeed, at that time, there was another possibility of permanently harmonizing the conflicting elements.

The spirit of the leaders, as well as the instincts of the masses, had risen above the range of ordinary feelings. The philosophy of the eighteenth century had made the statesmen of the Revolution anti-slavery men on principle. The elevation of mind and the generous emotions



nourished by that great struggle for liberty had confirmed them in their faith. They had expanded their desire for colonial independence into a broad assertion of the rights of human nature. From such convictions and impulses grew that grand platform of human liberty and equality — the Declaration of Independence. [Loud cheers.] All their public acts relating to the subject were based upon the conviction that the abnormity of slavery was to be put upon the course of ultimate extinction. Hence the great ordinance of 1787, and the legislation about the slave trade. And, indeed, had that spirit continued to govern the destinies of this Republic, slavery would have been gradually abolished, the foundation of the aristocratic tendency would have been taken away, and the future development of the country would have been placed upon the solid and fertile ground of social and political harmony embodied in truly democratic institutions.

But this healthy development was suddenly interfered with — “by the Abolitionists,” our opponents will say. No, not by the Abolitionists, for the general Abolition spirit of that period had brought slavery near its death. No, it was interfered with by the invention of the cotton-gin; and, strange enough, a progress in manufacturing industry worked a most deplorable reaction in moral and political ideas. Slavery, drooping in most of the States, became suddenly profitable, and the sordid greediness of gain crushed down in a great many hearts the love of principle. Slavery, instead of being an evil, a scourge, and a disgrace, became suddenly a great, economical, moral, and political blessing. New theories of government sprang out of this economical revolution, and the same system of social organization, which, but a short time before, had been the foulest blot on the American name, was suddenly discovered to be the corner-stone of demo-

cratic institutions. Even ministers of Christianity joined in the frantic dance around the golden calf, and anointed the idol with the sanction of divine origin. [Cheers.]

Such was the interference which prevented the abolition of slavery. Then the aristocratic character of Southern society was developed to a stronger and more obnoxious form. The old Cavalier element lost most of its best attributes; but its worst impulses found a congenial institution to feed upon, and out of the Cavalier grew the Slave-Lord. The struggle between the two antagonistic elements began now in earnest, and out of it grew the germs of the Rebellion as an almost inevitable consequence.

Permit me to show the most characteristic features of this strange history. Slavery, finding itself condemned by the universal opinion of mankind, wanted power in order to stand against so formidable an adversary. There was method in its proceedings. First it consolidated itself at home. To this end it planted itself upon the doctrine of State-rights, in the Southern acceptation of the word. I will call it the doctrine of Slave-States-Rights, for the rights of the Free States was a thing which the doctrine did not include. It did this in order to protect itself from outside interference while adapting the laws and institutions of the several Slave States completely to its interests and aspirations. Whenever the rights of man, and the fundamental liberties of the people—free speech, free press, trial by jury, writ of *habeas corpus*—came into conflict with the ruling interest, they were, in the Slave States, most unceremoniously overridden. The possession of slaves became an indispensable qualification for office—in some States by law, in others by custom. The exceptions were rare. The slave power assumed a most absolute dictatorship, which gradually absorbed all the guarantees of popular liberty. So much for its home policy.

But it did not stop there. Finding that the democratic element of free-labor society, with which it was yoked together, by the national organization of this Republic, had an expansive tendency, and was growing stronger every day out of all proportion, and fearing to be crowded out and overwhelmed by it, the slave power deemed it necessary either to control or to suppress that element. Its State-rights doctrine was an intrenched position, from which it now commenced making aggressive sallies. Morbidly sensitive of the rights of its own States, it asked that for its benefit the rights of the people of the Free States should be put down; it imperiously demanded the suppression of anti-slavery papers, and the punishment of anti-slavery speakers; in some cases it enforced its demand by arson and murder. This tendency brought forth, at a later period, the most flagrant violation of the rights of the Free States, the monstrous Fugitive-Slave Law, which, setting aside trial by jury and *habeas corpus*, demanded the rendition of fugitives, not according to the laws and forms of justice prevailing in the States where the fugitives were caught, but by a rule of summary and arbitrary proceeding dictated to Congress by the slave power, and by Congress, thus ruled, to the people. These proceedings made it necessary for the people of the North to stand up in defence of the rights of their own States. [Applause.] Thus the slave power, while insisting upon State-rights for itself, endeavored to accumulate power in its own hands to control the rest of the States according to its interests.

But the accumulation of power was not complete. The slave power wanted to rule the whole machinery, not only of its own States, but of the General Government also, for its own purposes. It wanted to adapt the whole of our national institutions to its own interests. It wanted a permanently controlling influence in our national legis-

lature. Hence its cry for a "balance of power," which meant either a permanent majority in Congress, or, if that could not be had, a vote strong enough to constitute a power of veto on all legislative acts. Hence its opposition to the admission of new Free States; hence its demand that slavery should take possession of all the national territories, out of which new Slave States might be formed. In this manner the slave power worked steadily for the conquest of supreme and absolute control of our national affairs; and had it succeeded, this Republic would now lie at its feet bound hand and foot, and the aristocratic element in this country would have achieved one of the strangest victories over the progressive spirit of this age.

It must be admitted, the slave power carried out its policy with such consummate acuteness, that Machiavelli himself, if he lived to-day, might profit from its teachings. The South was weak, the North was strong; but the South was united, and the North divided. The slave interest held the balance of power between the political parties of the country. In an evil hour—an evil hour, indeed, for this Republic—a political party inaugurated that most demoralizing, that most pernicious principle, that to the victors belong the spoils. And the slave power rose up and said, "Only to him will I give these things who falls down and worships me." And they fell down and worshipped in turn, but the "Democratic" party worshipped most. [Great applause.] To the victors belonged the spoils, and victory with the spoils could only be obtained by co-operation with and untiring subserviency to the slave power.

This was one of those dark periods in our political history which may send a blush to every manly cheek, and make us almost doubt of the innate nobility of human nature. The fate of a democratic republic seemed almost

decided by the self-degradation of freemen. What the united energy of the slave power might have vainly attempted, the inexhaustible obsequiousness of its Northern allies would have accomplished, had there not been a residue of virtue in the people. [Applause.]

But in the course of this struggle for absolute dominion, the slave power showed one tendency which gave it an entirely new aspect. At the time when it had intrenched itself in its doctrine of State rights, and was about to try its strength in offensive operations, it raised the threat of separation, secession, disunion, in order to enforce its demands. And that cry remained ever since its staple threat; and, fostered and strengthened by Northern obsequiousness, it became its most formidable weapon. What did this cry mean? It meant this: "If you will not permit us to rule this nation, we are determined to ruin it." This cry was raised and reiterated again and again, long before you heard of a Republican party. Then the slave power established its disloyal character, its anti-national tendency. It was then—mark what I say—it was then the great rebellion began. [Loud cheers.]

The slave power, which formerly had been only the adversary of an opposite element in the nation, became then the enemy of the nation itself. [Applause.] To be ruled by one who continually threatened to murder her—that was the situation of the American Republic. Then the Northern people had to struggle, not only for their rights and liberties, their dignity and prosperity, but in struggling against the pretensions of the slave power they fought for the life of American nationality. [Applause.] By one of the most singular perversions of human logic, the party of the slave power called itself the National party. While it was admitted in the North, that freedom was national and slavery was sectional, the party



of freedom was stigmatized as sectional, the party of slavery eulogized as national. A party, the main body of which continually flourished the knife of the assassin over the head of the nation—that party national! A truly loyal and national man will never feel tempted even to threaten the life of the nation. [Applause.] The slave power disclosed its enmity to the nationality, first by the threat, and then the earnestness of the threat by the attempt.

At last, when under Buchanan's Administration the assumptions and usurpations of the slave power culminated in the Dred Scott and Lecompton policy, the people of the North, the democratic element of the country, rose up, and at the election of 1860 it vindicated its liberties and its manhood. It rescued the Republic from the grasp of an anti-democratic as well as anti-national power. [Great applause.] Then the second great period of the history of the American people arrived at the crisis of its development. The first had solved the problem of achieving the foundation of the new nationality and defending it against its great enemy abroad; the problem of the second is to maintain the American nationality by defending it against its great enemy at home. The election of 1860 was a notice given to the slave power that the American nation meant no longer to live in cowardly fear of the murderous knife pointed at its heart by a set of imperious aristocrats, but that it meant to take its government into its own hands.

This was the first grand uprising of the democratic spirit of the people against the absolute control of the slave power. The high-handed attempt of the latter to force the people to surrender the attributes of our Government, springing from the Northern spirit of equality, to the Southern spirit of aristocratic dominion, was foiled, and the slave power, seeing that its arrogated privilege to

rule the nation was denied, began to execute its threat to ruin it. It withdrew at once into its doctrine of Slave-States-rights, and, carrying it to the criminal extent of secession, struck its murderous blow at the life of the nation. It transferred the contest from the forum to the battle-field, and once more Roundheads and Cavaliers, Democracy and Aristocracy, meet each other in arms. This is the history of the origin of this Revolution. I call it a Revolution, for it is a rebellion only on their side; it is a Revolution for the American people. [Applause.] This is the true character of the great struggle for the preservation of our nationality, a struggle which was initiated, not when the first gun was fired upon Fort Sumter, but when the slave aristocracy uttered the first threat of disunion; which arrived at its crisis when the slave aristocracy failed in its attempt to obtain complete control of our National Government, and struck the blow against the life of the nation; and which cannot end until the anti-national spirit is extinguished by the destruction of the institution which begot and fostered it. [Tremendous cheering.]

I have led you through this long, and perhaps tedious, summary of our social and political history for the purpose of showing that our present struggle is the natural outgrowth of an antagonism of which we find the germs in the first organization of American society. I have shown, also, that the aristocratic element, after having identified itself with the system of slavery, acted upon the command of its necessities. Its principal crime consisted at the beginning, and consists to-day, in its identifying itself with slavery instead of yielding to the democratic principles upon which a healthy national organization could be founded. But remaining faithful to slavery, it was impelled by the irresistible power of logic, from step to step, until at last it landed in the domain of high

treason. Finding slavery endangered by public opinion, it was natural that it should shut itself up against that dangerous influence. But being yoked together in a common national organization with the threatening influence of the expansive democratic element, it was natural that it should endeavor to control or suppress it by all the expedients of corruption and intimidation. But failing in this finally, and still insisting upon the perpetuation of slavery, it was natural that it should try to shut itself up more effectually—to isolate itself completely, by breaking up the national organization which held it under an influence so dangerous to its existence. Thus slavery, impelled by its necessities from step to step, was the real, the natural traitor against the American nationality, and the Southern people are only the victims of its inevitable treason. [Loud applause.] But if slavery, the enemy of American nationality, could not act otherwise without giving itself up, how are you to act, the defenders of American nationality?

The answer would seem to every unprejudiced mind as plain as the question. Still, strange as it may appear at first sight, there is a difference of opinion. Only three lines of policy suggest themselves. The most fertile ingenuity could not invent any beyond these three. Either we must permit the slave aristocracy to isolate itself territorially as well as politically—that is, we must consent to the breaking up of the American nationality; or, secondly, we must preserve our Union and nationality by striking down its enemies in arms and by extinguishing the social and political agency which in its nature is disloyal and anti-national; or, thirdly, we must invite the slave aristocracy back into the national organization, offering to it that supreme and absolute control of our national concerns without which it cannot insure its permanency in the Union.

On the first proposition the people have already pro-

nounced their judgment. To accept it was impossible. The question has been discussed thousands of times; and every enlightened mind, every true American heart, has always arrived at the same conclusion. Considerations of policy, national existence, safety, liberty, civilization, peace, all lead to the same result. The old cry, "The Union must and shall be preserved!" is not a mere watch-word of party. It is the instinctive outcry of the deepest convictions, of the immovable religious faith of the American mind. [Enthusiastic cheers.] This conviction, this faith, is proclaimed by the thunder of our artillery; it is confirmed by our victories; it is sealed with the blood of the people. [Great cheering.] This question is no longer open to discussion.

But the conflict between the two other propositions is the real point at issue in our present controversy. Our opponents may speak of tyranny, but the violence of their own denunciations gives the lie to their own assertions. It is dust thrown into the eyes of a deluded multitude. They may no longer have the courage to say that they are for slavery; they are still base enough to say that they are not against it. All their tirades and declamations hang loosely around this sentiment. The true issue, divested of all its incidental questions, is this: A nation ruled by the slave power, or a nation governing itself. For the first, they are ready to imperil victory and peace and Union; for the second, we are ready to destroy slavery forever. [Loud applause.]

The second line of policy before mentioned has been consistently acted upon by the party holding the reins of Government during the struggle. On some occasion President Lincoln uttered the following words: "I am not controlling events, but events control me." These words, applicable of course only to the leading measures of policy, have been denounced and ridiculed as a confession

of weakness; I see in them a sign of a just understanding of his situation. Revolutionary developments are never governed by the preconceived plans of individuals. Individuals may understand them, and shape their course accordingly; they may aid in their execution and facilitate their progress; they may fix their results in the form of permanent laws and institutions—but individuals will never be able to determine their character by their own conceptions. Every such attempt will prove abortive, and lead to violent reactions. A policy which is so controlled by the spirit of the times, and is based upon a just appreciation of circumstances, may, perhaps, not be very brilliant, but it will be safe, and, above all, eminently democratic. And I venture to suggest that a great many of those who indulge in the highest sounding figures of speech as to what great things they would do, if they had the power, would hardly be capable of conceiving so wise an idea as that which the President expressed in language so simple and so modest. [Applause.]

And thus the Government has steadily followed the voice of events—slowly, indeed, but never retracing a step. Slowly, did I say? We are apt to forget the ordinary relations of time, at a moment when the struggle of a century is compressing itself into the narrow compass of days and hours. What was to be done, and what was done, is plain. I showed you how, after the establishment of the first colonies the democratic spirit natural to new organizations failed to absorb the aristocratic element, on account of the introduction of slavery. I showed you how the philosophy of the eighteenth century, and the lofty spirit of the Revolutionary period, failed in gradually abolishing slavery in consequence of an economical innovation. Those two great opportunities were lost; the full bearing of the question was not understood. But now the slave power itself has made us under-



stand it. Now, at last, slavery has risen in arms against our nationality. It has defied us, for our own salvation, to destroy it. Slavery itself, with its defiance, has put the weapon into our hands, and in obedience to the command of events the Government of the Republic has at last struck the blow. Treason has defied us, obliged us to strike it, and we have struck it on the head. [Enthusiastic cheering.] The Government has not controlled events, but, resolutely following their control, proclaimed the emancipation of the slave. Mr. Lincoln was not the originator of the decree, he was the recorder of it. The executors are the people in arms. [Applause.]

But the opponents of the Government say that by this act the war was diverted from its original object; that it was commenced for the restoration of the Union only, but was made a war for the abolition of slavery. It will not be difficult to show the shallowness of this subterfuge of bad consciences. Those who read history understandingly will know that revolutionary movements run in a certain determined direction; that the point from which they start may be ascertained, but that you cannot tell beforehand how far they will go. The extent of their progress depends upon the strength of the opposition they meet; if the opposition is weak and short, the revolution will stop short also; but if the opposition is strong and stubborn, the movement will roll on until every opposing element in its path is trodden down and crushed.

I invite our opponents to look back upon the war of the Revolution. Was the Revolution commenced for the achievement of independence from Great Britain? No; it was commenced in opposition to the arbitrary acts of the British Government; it was commenced for the redress of specified grievances, and in vindication of colonial rights and liberties. Far-reaching minds may have foreseen the ultimate development, but it is well known that some of

the most energetic revolutionary characters disclaimed most emphatically all intention to make the colonies independent not long before independence was actually declared. And how did they come to divert the Revolutionary War from its original object? The process was simple. They permitted themselves to be controlled by events. In the course of the struggle they came to the conclusion that the rights and liberties of the colonies would not be secure as long as the British Government had the power to enforce arbitrary measures in this country; they saw that British dominion was incompatible with American liberty. Then independence was declared. It was decreed by the logic of events; it was recorded by Jefferson; it was enforced by Washington. [Applause.]

This was the way in which a struggle for a mere redress of grievances was "perverted" into a struggle for the abolition of British dominion. Is there anybody, to-day, bold enough to assert that this perversion was illegitimate? Let us return to the crisis in which we are engaged.

We went into the war for the purpose of maintaining the Union, and preserving our nationality. Although it was the slave power which had attempted to break up the Union, we did, at first, not touch slavery in defending the Union. No, with a scrupulousness of very doubtful merit, slavery was protected by many of our leaders—especially one of them, who at that time held the highest military command, made it a particular object not to hurt slavery while fighting against the rebellious slaveholder, and he exhausted all the resources of his statesmanship for that purpose. [Loud laughter and cheers.] It is true he exhausted, at the same time, the patience of the people. [Continued laughter.] That statesmanship threatened to exhaust all our military and financial resources; but if, indeed, it did threaten to exhaust the resources of the rebellion, the threat was very gentle. [Repeated laughter]

and cheers.] You remember the results of that period of kid-glove policy, which the South found so very gentlemanly: reverse after reverse; popular discontent rising to despondency; ruin staring us in the face. The war threatened, indeed, to become a failure; and if the resolution of the Chicago Convention, which declared the war a failure, had special reference to the period when the distinguished candidate of the Democratic party was General-in-Chief, then, it must be confessed, the Chicago Convention showed a certain degree of judgment. [Peals of laughter and cheers.]

Gradually it became clear to every candid mind that slavery, untouched, constituted the strength of the rebellion; but that slavery, touched, would constitute its weakness. The negro tilled its fields, and fed its armies; the negro carried its baggage, and dug its trenches; and the same negro was longing for the day when he would be permitted to fight for the Union, instead of being forced to work for the rebellion. To oblige him to work for the rebellion, instead of permitting him to fight for the Union, would have been more than folly—it would have been a crime against the nation. To give him his freedom, then, was an act of justice, not only to him, but to the American Republic. [Cheers.]

If the rebellious slave power had submitted, after the first six months of the war, it is possible that slavery might have had another lease of life. But its resistance being vigorous and stubborn; and not only that, its resistance being crowned with success, it became a question of life or death—the death of the nation, or the death of slavery. Then the Government chose. It chose the life of the nation by the death of slavery; and the revolution rolled over the treasonable institution, and crushed it wherever it found it. [Enthusiastic applause.]

Could an act which undermined the strength of the

enemy, and in the same measure added to our own—could that be called diverting the war from its original purpose? Was not the object of the war to restore the Union? How then could we refrain from using for our purposes an element which was certain to contribute most powerfully to that end? Was it not the object of the war to make the Union permanent by restoring loyalty to the Union? But by what means in the world can loyalty be restored, if it is not by crushing out the element which breeds disloyalty and treason as its natural offspring? [Applause.]

But if it is the opinion of our opponents that it was the original object of the war to lay the North helpless at the feet of the South, then it must be admitted the war is now much perverted from its original object. [Loud laughter and cheers.]

The matter stands clear in the light of experience. Every man who professes to be for the Union, and shows any tenderness for an agency which is bound to destroy the Union, has in his heart a dark corner into which the spirit of true loyalty has not yet penetrated. [Long continued applause.] And on the other hand, every man, whatever his previous opinions may have been, as soon as he throws his whole heart into the struggle for the Union, throws at the same time his whole heart into the struggle against slavery. [Applause.]

Look at some of the brightest names which the history of this period will hand down to posterity: your own Daniel S. Dickinson [cheers], Benjamin F. Butler of Massachusetts [cheers], the venerable Breckinridge of Kentucky [cheers], the brave Andrew Johnson of Tennessee [enthusiastic cheers], and many thousands of brave spirits of less note. You cannot say that they were Abolitionists; but they are honestly for the death of

slavery, because they are honestly for the life of the nation. [Loud applause.]

Emancipation would have been declared in this war, even if there had not been a single Abolitionist in America before the war. The measure followed as naturally, as necessarily, upon the first threatening successes of the rebellion, as a clap of thunder follows upon a flash of lightning. Nay, if there had been a life-long pro-slavery man in the Presidential chair, but a Union man of a true heart and a clear head—such a man as will lay his hand to the plough without looking back—he would, after the first year of the rebellion, have stretched out his hand to William Lloyd Garrison, and would have said to him, “Thou art my man.” Listening to the voice of reason, duty, conscience, he would have torn the inveterate prejudice from his heart, and with an eager hand he would have signed the death-warrant of the treacherous idol. [Applause.] And you speak of diverting the war from its legitimate object! As in the war of the Revolution no true patriot shrank back from the conclusion that colonial rights and liberties could not be permanently secured, but by the abolition of British dominion, so in our times no true Union man can shrink back from the equally imperative conclusion that the permanency of the Union cannot be secured, but by the abolition of its arch-enemy—which is slavery. The Declaration of Independence was no more the natural, logical, and legitimate consequence of the struggle for colonial rights and liberties, than the Emancipation Proclamation is the natural, logical, and legitimate consequence of our struggle for the Union. The Emancipation Proclamation is the true sister of the Declaration of Independence; it is the supplementary act; it is the Declaration of Independence translated from universal principle into universal fact. And the two great State papers will stand in the history of this country as



the proudest monuments, not only of American statesmanship, American spirit, and American virtue, but also of the earnestness and good faith of the American heart. The Fourth of July, 1776, will shine with tenfold lustre, for its glory is at last completed by the first of January, 1863. [Long-continued applause.]

Thus the same logic of things which had driven the naturally disloyal slave aristocracy to attempt the destruction of the Union impelled the earnest defenders of the Union to destroy slavery.

Still, we are told that the Emancipation Proclamation had an injurious effect upon the conduct of the war. This may sound supremely ridiculous at this moment, but it seems there is nothing too ridiculous for the leaders of the opposition to assert, and nothing too ridiculous for their followers to believe. Still, let us hear them. They say that the anti-slavery policy of the Government divided the North and united the South. And who were these patriots who so clamorously complained of the divisions in the North? They were the same men who divided. [Applause.]

I will tell them what the anti-slavery policy of the Government did do.

It furnished a welcome pretext for those in the North whose loyalty was shaky, and it permanently attached to our colors four millions of hearts in the South whose loyalty was sound. [Loud cheers.] It brought every man down to his true level. It made the negro a fighting patriot, and it made the pro-slavery peace Democrat a skulking tory. [Tremendous cheering.] It added two hundred thousand black soldiers to our armies, and it increases their number daily.

I wish to call your special attention to this point. I will not discuss the soldierly qualities of the negro. Although on many bloody fields he has proved them, and

although I consider a black man fighting for his own and our liberty far superior, as a soldier, to a white man who dodges a fight against slavery [great applause], yet, for argument's sake, I am willing to suppose that the negro soldier is best to be used as a garrison and guard soldier on our immense lines of railroads, in fortified places and posts. This, not even our opponents will deny. But do they not see that, in using him thus, we can release so many white veterans from such duty and send them forward to the battle-field? Do they not see that only in this way it becomes possible to effect those formidable concentrations of military power, and thus to achieve those glorious results which have made the rebellion reel and the hearts of Northern traitors quake? Do they not see that, while it may not be the negro who beats the enemy on the battle-field, it is more than doubtful whether, without the negro reinforcements, we could hurl such strength against the enemy as makes victory sure? No wonder that there are opposed to the negro soldiers those whose cheeks grew pale when they heard of the taking of Atlanta, and of Sheridan whirling the rebels out of the Valley of Virginia. [Loud applause.]

The Emancipation Proclamation, I say, added two hundred thousand black soldiers to our armies, and it may indeed have kept some white ones away, who merely wanted an excuse for not going anyhow. They say a white soldier cannot fight by the side of the negro. I know of white soldiers who were very glad to see the negro fight by their side. Ask our brave men at Petersburg, along the Mississippi, and on the Southern coast: Their cheers, when they saw the black columns dash upon the works of the enemy, did not sound like indignant protests against the companionship. But those dainty folks who raise the objection as a point of honor, will, I candidly believe, indeed not fight by the side of the

negro, for they are just the men who will not fight at all. [Great cheering.]

The Emancipation Proclamation and the enlistment of negroes had an injurious effect upon the war! and because the emancipation decree had an injurious effect upon the war, the war is a "failure!" Indeed, it looks much like it! The peace Democrats may call a man who undoubtedly is high authority with them, they may call Jefferson Davis himself upon the stand as a witness, to say what he thinks of this failure; they may call for the professional opinions of Lee, Johnston, Hood and Early, and I am willing to abide by it. Attorneys Grant, Sherman, Sheridan and Farragut have already entered their pleas in the case, and, methinks, the judicial bench of history is about to pronounce the final verdict. And when that verdict is out, the genius of justice will rejoice that the power of the slave aristocracy could be beaten down in spite of the united efforts and of the exhaustion of all its resources, and that the cause of liberty and Union could triumph without the support of those whose hearts were divided between God and mammon. Yes, freedom will at one blow have conquered the whole force of its adversaries — those that were in arms against it as open enemies, and those that imperilled its success as uncertain friends. [Enthusiastic applause.]

But the Emancipation Proclamation did us still another service. It is well known that at the beginning of the war not only the sympathies of the most powerful European governments were against us, but that the sympathies of European nations were doubtful. Our armies were beaten, our prospects looked hopeless, and to the current running against us we had to offer no counterpoise. The nations of Europe looked across the ocean with anxious eyes, and asked: "Will not now, at last, the great blow be struck against the most hideous abomi-

nation of this age? Are they so in love with it that they will not even destroy it to save themselves?" For you must know every enlightened European is a natural anti-slavery man. His heart, although burdened with many loads, has not been corrupted by the foul touch of that institution, which seems to demoralize everything that breathes its atmosphere. [Applause.] And when they saw, to their utter astonishment and disgust, that at first slavery was not touched, their hearts sunk within them, and they began to explain the reverses we suffered by the moral weakness of our cause.

At last the Emancipation Proclamation came. A shout of triumph went up from every liberty-loving heart. Once more the friends of freedom in each hemisphere joined in a common sympathy. Once more the cause of the American people became the cause of liberty the world over. Once more our struggle was identified with the noblest aspirations of the human race. Once more our reverses found a response of sorrow in the great heart of mankind, and our victories aroused a jubilant acclaim which rolled around the globe. [Loud applause.] Do you remember the touching address of the workingmen of Manchester? While the instincts of despotism everywhere conspired against us; while the aristocracy of Great Britain covered us with their sneering contempt; while the laboring men in England began to suffer by the stopping of the cotton supply, and the nobility and the princes of industry told them that their misery was our fault, the great heart of the poor man rose in its magnificence, and the English laborer stretched his hard hand across the Atlantic to grasp that of our President, and he said: All hail, Liberator! Although want and misery may knock at my doors, mind it not. I may suffer, but be you firm! Let the slave be free, let the dignity of human nature be vindicated, let universal liberty triumph! All hail, American

people! we are your brothers! [Enthusiastic and long-continued cheers.]

And this sympathy did not remain a mere idle exchange of friendly feelings. That sympathy controlled public opinion in Europe, and that public opinion held in check the secret desires of unfriendly governments. Mason and Slidell slink from ante-chamber to ante-chamber like two ticket-of-leave men [bursts of laughter], and they find written above every door the inscription: "No slavery here!" [Loud applause.] No Government would dare to recognize the slaveholding Confederacy without loading itself down with the contempt and curses of the people. The irresistible moral power of a great and good cause has achieved for us victories abroad no less signal than the victories our arms have achieved for us at home. Our arms will lay the enemies of the nation helpless at our feet, but Emancipation has pressed the heart of the world to our hearts. [Repeated cheers.]

But our opponents are not moved by all this. They come with their last pitiable quibble, and I beg your pardon for answering that also. They say: "Your Emancipation Proclamation was nothing but wind after all." The proclamation did not effect the emancipation of the slaves. It is true, slavery is not abolished by the proclamation alone, just as little as by the mere Declaration of Independence the British armies were driven away and the independence of the Colonies established. But that declaration was made good forever by the taking of Yorktown, and I feel safe in predicting that our proclamation will be made as good forever by the taking of Richmond. [Tremendous cheers.] But there is one point at which all parallel with the Revolution fails. If in those times a person had proposed to make an anti-independence man Commander-in-Chief, he would have been put into the mad-house, while in our days those are running around



loose who seriously try to persuade the people to make an anti-emancipation man President of the United States. [Laughter and applause.]

Yes, incredible as it may seem to all who are not initiated into the mysteries of American politics, the idea is seriously entertained to carry out that third line of policy of which I spoke before — to invite the slave power back into the national organization, offering to it that supreme and absolute control of our national concerns without which it cannot insure its permanency in the Union; and, adroitly enough, this programme has been condensed into a single euphonious sentence which is well apt to serve as the campaign cry of a party. It is this: The Union must be restored "as it was."

We are frequently cautioned against visionaries in politics, because with their extravagant schemes they are apt to lead people into dangerous and costly experiments. But the visionaries in innovation are harmless compared with the visionaries who set their hearts upon restoring what is definitively gone, and has become morally impossible; for while the former may find it difficult to make the people believe in the practicability of their novel ideas, the latter not rarely succeed in persuading the multitude that what had been may be again. Such a visionary was Napoleon, who planned the restoration of the empire of Charlemagne; he flooded Europe with blood, and failed. But the restoration of the empire of Charlemagne was mere child's play in comparison with the restoration of the Union "as it was," and a task far more difficult than that to which the genius of old Napoleon succumbed, is by a discriminating fate wisely set apart for our "young Napoleon" to perform. [Peals of laughter.] We are, indeed, assured by his friends that he will again exhaust all the resources of his statesmanship for that purpose. [Continued laughter.] This states-

manship is indeed very obliging. It can hardly have recovered from its first exhaustion, and now it tells us kindly that it is ready to exhaust itself once more. It would be uncivil to accept the sacrifice. We will take the good will for the deed and dispense with it. [Repeated laughter.] Still, I consider it an evidence of appreciative judgment on the part of his friends to have selected just that candidate for a task, which can be performed only in his characteristic manner: setting out with a grand flourish of promises and coming back with a grander flourish of apologies. [Renewed laughter and cheers.]

Restore the Union "as it was!" Did you ever hear of a great war that left a country in the same condition in which it had found it? Did you ever hear of a great revolution which left the political and social relations of the contending parties as they had been before the struggle? And there are visionaries who believe that relations which rested upon mutual confidence can be restored when that confidence has been drowned in a sea of blood? Do you really think you can ever restore the confidence "as it was" between two companions, one of whom has been detected in an attempt to rob and murder the other in his sleep? By no process of reasoning can you prove—nay, not even in the wildest flights of your imagination can you conceive, the possibility that the relations between a dominant and an enslaved race can be placed upon the ancient footing, when two hundred thousand men of the enslaved race have been in arms against their masters, and in arms, too, at the call of the supreme authority of the Republic. You cannot leave them such as they are; you cannot permit them even to remember that they have fought for us as well as for themselves, without following up the events which made them what they are, to the full consummation of the free-

dom of the race. And, on the other hand, you cannot keep the race in bondage without reducing those who now are fighting for their own and our freedom to their former state of subjection; and you cannot do this without inaugurating the most sweeping, the most violent and bloody reaction against justice and liberty the world ever witnessed. And you cannot provoke that reaction without provoking another revolution on its heels. And now you speak of restoring the Union "as it was!" [Applause.]

Such things have been tried before, and we find the consequences on the records of history. England had her restoration of the Stuart dynasty, and it led to the revolution of 1688. France had her restoration of the Bourbon dynasty, and it led to the revolution of 1830. And why these revolutions? Because the Stuarts tried a reaction against the principles sealed with English blood at Naseby; because the Bourbons tried a reaction against the principles sealed with French blood at the Bastille and on a hundred battle-fields. Might not America profit by the example? You think you can restore the cotton dynasty without provoking reaction and another revolution? [Loud applause.]

But for our opponents, it seems, history has no intelligible voice. We have only to shake hands with the Rebels, and the past is blotted out. We have only to act as if nothing had happened, and all will be as it was before something did happen. [Laughter.] This is their promise. I appeal to the people. If your leaders promised you to revive all those fallen in battle, and to gather up the blood spilt on so many fields, and to infuse it into the veins of the resurrected, the presumption upon your credulity could not be more extravagant. Are you so devoid of pride, are you so completely without self-respect, as to permit so gross an imposition to be pre-

sented to you, as if you were capable of being trapped by it? Will you suffer them to insult your understanding, and to stamp you as incorrigible fools, with impunity? This, indeed, is one of the cases in which we do not know what to admire most—the towering impudence of the impostors, or the unfathomable stupidity of the victims. [Laughter and cheers.] Let those who go into the open trap of the jugglers, glory in the reputation of the folly. But a man of sense cannot permit himself to be gulled by so transparent an absurdity without despising himself. I call upon you to vindicate the fair fame of the Americans, as an intelligent people! [Continued applause.]

But it would be unfair to presume that those who raised the artful cry have merely done so for the purpose of setting a trap for political idiots. There is really something which they do want to restore, and there they are in earnest. They really do mean to revive one feature of the old Union; not that fidelity to the eternal principles of justice and liberty, which in the early times of this Republic was the admiration of mankind, but another thing, which has become an object of disgust to every patriotic heart, and has succeeded in creating doubts in the practicability of democratic institutions. I have spoken of the demoralizing principle: “To the victors belong the spoils;” and how, during the most disgraceful period of our history, victory with the spoils could only be obtained by abject subserviency to the slave aristocracy. And now, what they mean to restore, is slavery to its former power. Again the South is to be a unit for the interests of slavery; again the united Southern vote with a few Northern States is to command our elections; again the knife of secession is to be flourished over the head of the nation; again our legislators and the people are to be terrorized with the cry: “Do what our Southern brethren want you to do, or they will dissolve the Union once

more!" and the terrors of the past are to be used as a powerful means of intimidation for the future. Again this great nation is to be swayed, not by reason, but by fear; and again the interests and the virtue of the people are to be traded away for public plunder. And so they stand before the Rebels as humble supplicants with this ignominious appeal: "We are tired of being our own masters; come back and rule us: We are tired of our manhood; come back and degrade us! We do not feel well in a Union firmly established; come back and threaten us! We are eager once more to sell out the liberties and honor of the people for the sweets of public plunder; come, oh come back and corrupt us!" [Cries of "Shame! shame!"]

And in this disgraceful supplication they call upon a great and noble people to join them: to join after deeds and sacrifices so heroic, after a struggle for the nation's free and great future, so glorious; to join at a moment when at last victory crowns our helmets, and when the day of peace, bright and warm, dawns upon our dark and bloody fields. Ah, if it could be, if the nation could so basely forget her great past, and her greater future; if the nation could so wantonly denude herself of all self-respect and shame and decency, and plunge into the mire of this most foul prostitution; if this could be, then, indeed, betrayed mankind could not hate us with a resentment too deep: all future generations could not despise us with a contempt too scorching; there would be no outrage on the dignity of human nature in the annals of the world for which this base surrender would not furnish a full apology. If it could be so, then every one of your great battles would be nothing but a mass-murder of the first degree; the war with its ruin and desolation would have been nothing but an act of wanton barbarism. Then be silent of your glorious exploits, you soldiers in



the field; conceal your scars and mangled limbs, you wounded heroes; you mothers and wives and sisters, who wear your mourning with pride, hide your heads in shame — for the triumphant rebel sits upon the graves of our dead victories, whip in hand, and with a mocking grin laughs at the dastardly self-degradation of his conquerors. [Enthusiastic applause.]

It is difficult to speak about this with calmness; yet we must make the effort.

This, then, is our situation: We have to choose between two lines of policy, represented by two parties — the one fully appreciating the tendency of the movement, and resolutely following the call of the times; fully and honestly determined to achieve the great object of preserving the nation, and with consistent energy using every legitimate means necessary for that purpose; striking the rebellion by crippling the strength of the traitors, and restoring loyalty by stopping the source of treason; a party, not infallible indeed, but inspired by the noblest impulses of the human heart, and impelled by the dearest interests of humanity; in full harmony with the moral laws of the universe, in warm sympathy with the humane and progressive spirit of our age. Let its policy be judged by its fruits; the heart of mankind beating for our cause; the once down-trodden and degraded doing inestimable service for our liberty as well as their own; the armies of the Union sweeping like a whirlwind over rebeldom, and the rebellion crumbling to pieces wherever we touch it. [Cheers.] Would it be wise to abandon a course of policy, which, aside of our moral satisfaction, has given us such material guaranties of our success? And what inducement is offered to us for leaving it? Is it a policy still clearer and more satisfactory to our moral nature? Is its success still more certain, a result still more glorious? Let us see what they present us.

A party which does not dare to advance a single clear and positive principle upon which it proposes to act; a party which gives us nothing but a vague assurance of its fidelity to the Union coupled with the proposition of stopping the war, which alone can lead to the restoration of the Union; giving us a platform which its candidate does not dare to stand upon, and a candidate who quietly submits to the assertions of his supporters that he will be obliged to stand on the platform; a party which was waiting two months for a policy, and then found its policy upset by events two days after it had been declared; a party floundering like a drunken man between a treacherous peace and a faithless war, between disunion that shall not be and a kind of union that can not be; a party which is like a ship without compass and rudder, with a captain who declares that he will not do what he is hired to do [laughter], with a set of officers who swear that he shall do it [continued laughter], with a crew who were enticed on board by false pretences, and who are kept by the vague impression that there is something good in the kitchen, [repeated laughter and applause]; and that vessel bound for a port which does not exist on the map. [Bursts of laughter and applause.] Is not this picture true in every touch? ["Yes! yes!"]

And why all this wild confusion of ideas and cross purposes? Why all these ridiculous absurdities in its propositions? Simply because that party refuses to stand upon the clear and irrevocable developments of history, and denies the stern reality of accomplished facts; because it repudiates the great and inexorable laws by which human events are governed; because it shuts its eyes against the manifest signs of the times; because, while pretending to save the Union, it protects the Union's sworn enemy; because it deems it consistent with loyalty to keep alive the mother of treason; in one word, because it insists

upon saving slavery in spite of its suicidal crime. And to this most detestable monomania it is ready to subordinate every other principle, every other interest, every other consideration of policy. To save slavery it throws all imaginable impediments in the way of every measure of the Government directed against the main strength of the rebellion; to save slavery it would rather have seen our armies doomed to defeat by weakness than strengthened for victory by the colored element; to save slavery it would rather have seen foreign governments interfere in favor of the rebellion than the heart of mankind attached to our cause by the glorious decree of liberty; to save slavery it insists upon interrupting the magnificent course of our victories by a cessation of hostilities, which would save the Rebellion from speedy and certain ruin; to save slavery it is ready to sacrifice the manhood of the people, and to lay them at the feet of the rebel aristocracy as humble suppliants for an ignominious rule. [Applause.] And this rank madness you would think of placing at the helm of affairs in a crisis which will decide our future forever?

I invite those of our opponents whose heads and hearts are not irretrievably wrapt in self-deception, to mount with me for a moment a higher watch-tower than that of party. Look once more up and down the broad avenues of your history. Show me your men in the first great days of the Republic whose names shine with untarnished lustre, the men whom you parade in the foremost ranks when you boast before the world abroad of your nation's greatness; there is not one of them who did not rack his brain to find a way in which the Republic could be delivered of the incubus of slavery. But their endeavors were in vain. The masses of the people did not see the greatness of the danger; their eyes were blinded by the seductive shine of momentary advantages. Then at once began

one of those great laws by which human affairs right themselves, to operate. It is the law that a great abuse, urged on by its necessities, must render itself insupportable and defy destruction. Slavery grew up under your fostering care; with its dimensions grew its necessities. It asked for security at home, and what it asked was given. It asked for its share in what we held in common, and what it asked was given. It asked for the lion's share, and accompanied its demand with a threat, and what it asked was given. Then it asked all we held in common. It asked for a dictatorship, and the accompanying threat became a defiance. The people of the North rose up and said: "So far and no farther!" Then slavery, with fatal madness, raised its arm against the palladium which cannot be touched with impunity; it urged into our hands the sword of self-defence; with blind insolence it threw into the face of the nation the final challenge: "Kill me or I will kill thee!" The challenge could not be declined; the nation refused to be killed, and slavery had the full benefit of its defiance. [Enthusiastic cheering.] Do you not see that this decree of self-destruction was written by a hand mightier than that of mortal man?

And you will stand up against it? What are you about to do? Stop and consider! Slavery is dying fast. Its life is ebbing out of a thousand mortal wounds. Even its nearest friends in rebeldom are standing around its death-bed in utter despair; even they give it up. Hardly anything remains to be done but to close its eyelids, and to write the coroner's verdict: "Slavery having challenged the American nation to mortal combat, killed itself by running madly into the sword of its antagonist." [Applause.] There it lies. And you—you will revive it? What? That you should have served it when it was in the fulness of its power, that, with a violent stretch of

charity, we may understand, although it revolted our hearts. But to revive it when it is dying! To think of galvanizing into new life the hideous carcass whose vitality is being extinguished by the hand of fate! To attempt to fasten anew and artificially upon the nation a curse of which for a century she longed in vain to be rid, and which at last is being wiped out by the great process of providential retribution! To resuscitate and nurse to new power of mischief the traitress that fell in an attempt to assassinate the Republic! Revive slavery in the midst of the nineteenth century! Have you considered the enormity of the undertaking? Look around you! You see a great Republic purified of her blackest stain, which sent a blush of shame to her cheeks when the world abroad pointed to it; you see the heart of a noble people relieved of the galling burden of wrong and guilt; you see the nations of the world stretching out to us their brotherly hands and cheering us on with their inspiring acclamations; from the down-trodden and degraded on earth to the very angels in heaven you hear all good and generous hearts join in swelling chorus of gratitude and joy, for at last the great iniquity is tumbling down [tremendous cheers]—and now strike heaven and earth in the face and revive it? Now poison the future of the Republic again, now imperil the life of the nation again and revive it? Are you in earnest? Here we stand before an atrocity so appalling that we seek in vain for a parallel on the darkest pages of history; we search in vain the darkest corners of the human heart to find a motive or reason that might excuse a crime so ridiculous for its folly, a folly so disgraceful for its wickedness.

But, thank God, it is impossible! [Thundering and long-continued cheering.] You think you can stem the irresistible current of events with your contrivances of political legerdemain, with your peace-cry, which is trea-



son, and your war-cry, which is fraud; with your hypocritical protests against a tyranny which does not exist, and your artful imposition of a "Union as it was," and cannot again be! With these pigmy weapons you think you can avert the sweep of gigantic forces! Poor schemers, you might as well try to bring a railroad train, running at full speed, back to its starting-point, by butting your little heads against the locomotive. You might as well try to catch in your arms the falling waters of the Niagara in the midst of the cataract, to carry them back to their source. [Loud applause.] In vain you sacrifice your honor for what is infamous. In vain you jeopardize the life of the nation for what is dead! The doom of your cause is written in the stars. If you love yourselves, and want to secure the respect of your children, then, I beseech you, leave the scandalous and hopeless task to the ignorant and brainless, who may show, as an excuse for the mad attempt, the weakness of their minds; and to those hardened villains who have become as insensible to the secret lash of conscience as to the open contempt of mankind. But if you will not, then happy those of you whose names will sink into utter oblivion, for only they will escape the ignominious distinction of becoming a mark for the detestation of posterity. [Great cheering.]

Revive slavery in the midst of the nineteenth century! And you dare to hope that the American people will aid in this crazy attempt? in this crime against justice, liberty and civilization? in this treason against future generations? You dare to expect the American nation to commit suicide that slavery may live? Poor men, desist! You are undone. You do not seem to know that he must fail who appeals to the cowardice of the American people. [Tumultuous cheering.] Step out of the way of the nation who marches with a firm step and a proud heart after the martial drum-beat of her destiny. She feels

that the struggle of ages compresses itself into the portentous crisis of this hour. It is for coming centuries she fights; and already she sees before her what was once only a patriotic dream rise into magnificent, sunlit reality: Liberty! Liberty and Union! one and inseparable! now and forever! [Long-continued demonstrations of enthusiasm.]

## XII.

### APPEAL TO COMMON SENSE.

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SPEECH DELIVERED AT THE ACADEMY OF MUSIC, MILWAUKEE, ON THE 28<sup>TH</sup> OF OCTOBER, 1864.

*Like the two preceding ones this speech was delivered in the Presidential campaign of 1864. It was the object of the speaker to review those points of the controversy, a full discussion of which the line of argument followed in his previous addresses had not permitted. This speech bears, therefore, to a certain extent, the character of a supplement. At the time of its delivery the Congressional and State elections in Pennsylvania, Ohio and Indiana had already taken place, and the result was so favorable to the Union cause, that the Presidential election seemed to be no longer in doubt.*

MR. PRESIDENT AND FELLOW-CITIZENS:—

My experience leads me to believe that the party arrayed against the Government of the Republic in this crisis contains a large number of people who honestly mean to do right, but who, by force of habit, are following their accustomed leaders without questioning the consistency of their conduct and the candor and truthfulness of their representations. Their principal failing is that they are too careless to think for themselves, for a little independence of mind joined to their good intentions would certainly lead them to see what is right, and to act accordingly. It is to them that I will address myself. From the Democratic leaders I will appeal to the Democratic masses. I shall abstain from all attempts to capti-

vate their senses with oratorical display, and address myself to their common sense with the simplest language at my command.

The object of our struggle with the rebellious people of the South is, and ought to be, *to restore the Union, and to make it a permanent institution*. Every candid man among our opponents, who has not banished the last remnant of patriotic feeling from his heart, will accept this definition as correct. Whoever is not in favor of restoring the Union is a disunionist, and ought to be sent to his friends across the lines. [Applause.] Whosoever pretends to be in favor of restoring the Union, but not in favor of making the Union a permanent institution, is either a knave or a fool, and in neither capacity entitled to the esteem and confidence of his fellow-citizens. [Loud applause.] With him it is not worth while to reason.

As to the object of the great struggle, then, we are agreed. Our disagreement seems to be about the means and measures by which the common object is to be achieved. Let us review the points of difference.

We have tried and are trying to accomplish the restoration of the Union by the experiment of war. Are you opposed to this? If you are so now, you certainly were not always so. There was a time, only three short years ago, when most of those, whose feelings have since become so peaceable, clamored for war with bursting enthusiasm. They predicted that the Democrats alone would drive the rebels into the Gulf of Mexico; they spoke of nothing but swords and bayonets; even Fernando Wood helped in raising a regiment. The war was called a holy war that must be fought out to the last drop of blood. You remember the glorious time of the great uprising. But if the war was a holy war then, why are you opposed to it now? Is not the cause of the rebels as damnable to-day as it was then? Are not our enemies the same? Has

the restoration of the Union become less desirable, less necessary? Why, then, your opposition?

Your Democratic Convention at Chicago, which may be said to have represented all elements of the opposition party, has given us a reason. By a unanimous vote it declares that the war is a failure, and that, therefore, hostilities must be stopped. Good. But what is now to be done? Will you give up the Union? No, your Convention declares that the Union must be restored. If so, and the war having failed to do it, some other agency must be found out which will be more effective—and, indeed, the Chicago Convention tells us that, if we want to restore the Union, peaceable means must be resorted to. But what assurance have you, that, war having failed, peaceable means will succeed? Have the rebels told you so? No. They have declared a hundred times, with terrible emphasis, that no concession ever so liberal, no persuasion ever so seductive, will induce them to return to their allegiance. I defy your Democratic leaders to show anything to the contrary. Or did the Democratic Convention base their hopes upon any precedent in history, where a power, against which the experiment of war had proved a failure, yielded and surrendered all it had been contending for with arms, to the meek and humble appliance of coaxing? There is none. It is against common sense; it is against human nature. But what in the world, then, did they base their confidence in the efficiency of peaceable means upon?

The matter resolves itself into this: If the war is a failure, mere entreaty is hopeless, for the rebels have nothing to fear if they refuse. If you want entreaty to succeed, you must make the war succeed first, for your strength is the only thing upon which your entreaty can stand. But your leaders tell you that you must abandon the experiment of war, and restore the Union by peaceable



means, while peaceable propositions are most clearly and perfectly hopeless unless they are backed and supported by success in war. Do you see the absurdity of this? The Union must be restored; we failed in restoring it by war; it must be restored by peaceable means; peaceable propositions cannot succeed unless backed and supported by warlike successes; but the experiment of war must be given up. This is the policy of your leaders. [Laughter.] In adopting this policy your leaders either knew what they were doing, or they did not know it. If they did not know it, they were men without sense; if they did know it, they were men without honesty. My Democratic friends, are they in either case fit to guide you? [Laughter and applause.]

But let us examine the premises upon which they built such singular conclusions. Is the war really a failure? Pardon me, if I deem it useless to go into details in order to answer that question. Only three years ago the rebellion commanded almost every foot of ground and every seaport south of the Ohio and the Potomac, and now, of this immense territory, all but one-third is in our hands. [Applause.] Only three years ago the armies of the rebellion were so strong that the gentleman who is now the Democratic candidate for the Presidency, while in command of our largest army, always complained that the rebels, wherever he met them, were much too strong for him. [Laughter.] Where are they now? Reduced to two armies, one behind the entrenchments of Petersburg, unable to move, and the other, Hood's, on a raiding excursion in Tennessee; and the latter, I apprehend, will soon be at a loss how to move quickly enough. [Great laughter and cheers.] The war a failure when the tidings of victory come upon us in torrents, borne by the whirlwinds of Atlanta and the Shenandoah Valley? [Repeated cheers.]

But your leaders tell you, you must distrust the bulletins of the War Department, and that many of those great victories are nothing but electioneering tricks. It is a sorry policy, indeed, which forbids you to believe in your country's glory. [Applause.] Electioneering tricks! The capture of Atlanta was a capital electioneering trick, I own it. [Shouts of laughter.] No more consummate trickster on record than Phil. Sheridan! [Repeated laughter.] Electioneering tricks, indeed! I apprehend, if your Democratic candidate for the Presidency had played a few electioneering tricks of that description, the election returns from Pennsylvania, Indiana and Ohio might have been different, and the late commander of the Army of the Potomac would have no reason to stand in mortal fear of the soldiers' vote! [Loud applause.]

But I am willing to let your leaders have the full benefit of their representations. If they refuse to trust the bulletins of the War Department, will they permit themselves to doubt also the veracity of one of their own highest authorities, Jefferson Davis himself? [Laughter.] See, then, Jefferson Davis dolefully perambulating the little remnant of his tottering Confederacy; hear him most plaintively bewail his disasters; hear him say that the hope of the Southern cause hangs upon the women and the little boys and the old grey-beards, since the stock of young men is exhausted, and since two-thirds of their soldiers have run away from their colors! Did you read the speech Jefferson Davis delivered at Macon? And now, when even he, who is certainly not in the employ of our War Department—when even *he* tells us by implication that the end is near; when even *he* shows us how great a success the war is on our part, what excuse is there left for your Democratic leaders to declare the war a failure? [Loud applause.]

Let us be honest, my Democratic friends. Neither you

nor your leaders do this moment believe that this war is a failure, and I am sure there is not a single man in this vast assembly who would have courage enough to stand up and say it is. But what, then, becomes of the Chicago argument, that, *because* the war is a failure, peaceable means must be resorted to? Is it not to propose that which is absurd, on the ground of that which is a lie? [Great cheering.] And such leaders you would follow?

I am willing to admit, this was not always the ground upon which they based their opposition to the Administration. But a short time ago they declaimed against the Administration because the conduct of the war was not vigorous enough. Were they sincere in this? We can apply a test which is very simple. They could prove their sincerity only by doing all they could to make the conduct of the war more vigorous. Had they been sincere, they would have zealously aided the Government in strengthening its authority; they would have eagerly helped in procuring men and money; they would have applauded the President for removing from stations of great responsibility commanders who had shown their inefficiency. This it would have been natural for them to do, had their complaint been sincere. But what did they do? Instead of endeavoring to re-establish the authority of the Government in the rebel States, they endeavored to undermine it even in the loyal States. Did they not? They clamored against every exercise of power on the part of the Government against open and secret traitors. Did they not? They spoke and voted in Congress against almost every measure by which the Treasury might be enabled to meet the extraordinary exigencies of the service. Did they not? They protested against filling up the army by conscription when volunteering began to flag. Did they not? They raised an outcry of indignation against the reinforcement of our army by negro

troops. Did they not? They assailed the Government with boundless fierceness when a General was removed from command, who had been so uniformly unfortunate, that when once or twice fortune smiled upon him, he did not recognize her. Did they not? [Great applause.]

And now, while doing all to keep the Treasury lean, and the army feeble, complain that the conduct of the war is not vigorous enough! Is not this as if you would put a man upon starvation fare, and then complain that he does not grow fat? [Loud laughter and applause.] And this is what they propose to do to make the war more vigorous: if we will but place the Government into their hands, they will dismiss from the army the two hundred thousand negro soldiers, whose services have become indispensable, and will abandon the conscription by which the gap thus made might be filled up. Is not that like bleeding a man to within an inch of his life preparatory to a prize-fight? [Repeated laughter and applause.] Nay, they propose to do one thing, which is indeed calculated to impart the most terrible vigor to the conduct of the war: they will not leave the supreme direction of our military forces in the hands of the hero of Vicksburg, but they will place the hero of the seven days' retreat over him. [Bursts of laughter and applause.] There is some method in all this, for at Chicago they have resolved to stop the war altogether, and, it must be admitted, they know how to do it. Yes, after having declaimed so much about a lack of vigor in the conduct of the war, they propose to stop the war altogether, as if the most vigorous way of fighting were not to fight at all. [Repeated bursts of laughter and cheers.] I appeal again to you, my friends; men who deal in such absurdities, such men would you not be ashamed to follow as your leaders?

But I will be just to them. They grounded their complaints upon other reasons. While pretending that the

conduct of the war was not vigorous enough in one direction, it seemed to be a little too vigorous for them in another. They complained that the war was carried on by our Government with illegitimate means, and that, therefore, they could not support the Administration. And what did the use of illegitimate means on the part of our Government consist in? In this, that we used the enemy's property for our advantage. Could they blame the Government for a thing which is done the world over, and which is justified as a perfectly legitimate means of warfare by the law of nations? Yes, they did so, and I will prove it; and in order to prove it, I shall place myself exactly upon the same ground which you, Democrats, have occupied for years.

Your leaders tell you that negro slaves are property just in the same measure and manner as horses and cattle and provisions are property. Granted for argument's sake. As our armies penetrated into the enemy's country, a large quantity of that negro property fell into their hands. What were we to do with the captured negroes? Send them back to their masters? or keep them, feed them, clothe them for the purpose of returning them at some future time? We captured also cavalry horses and beeves. Who would have thought of sending them back to their owners, or of feeding and grooming without using them? The captured cattle property was butchered and distributed in the shape of rations; upon the captured horse property we mounted our cavalymen; why, then, in the name of common sense, should we not put the captured negro property to such use as it was capable of? Do you see how absurd it would be to object to this? And, mark you well, Democrats, this property theory is yours, and I have abstained from discussing the matter from the stand-point of my own principles.

But the principal thing against which your leaders



protested was that the negroes were armed and employed as soldiers in the field. Keep in mind, I am still, for argument's sake, speaking of the negro as a mere species of property. Why, then, should negro property not be used for fighting purposes? It is reasonable, nay, it is necessary that, when engaged in war, we should put all our means and instruments of warfare to the highest measure of usefulness. We want our rifles and our artillery to have as much power of destruction as possible. If we could procure a cannon that would demolish a whole regiment at one blow, would we not use it? If we could make our horses fight, instead of merely letting them carry our cavalymen, would we not do so? Why, then, not put the negro to the highest measure of his usefulness? If he is able to fight, instead of merely driving teams or carrying bundles, why should we not make him fight? Would it not be folly to abstain from doing so? Do not the rebels make the savage Indian fight against civilized Union soldiers? Would they not make alligators fight in their ranks, if alligators were capable of discipline? Why, then, in the name of common sense, was it not better to make the negro fight for the Union, instead of obliging him to work for the rebellion? I repeat it, Democrats, and I do not want you to forget it; in reasoning thus I have placed myself upon your own ground, and I mean to hold you to the logical consequences of your own position; if the negro is the property of our enemies, what reason is there that we should not use him as the enemy's property, captured in war? [Applause.]

Still, in order to satisfy the most scrupulous of you, I will again bring an authority which will be satisfactory to the most fastidious of Democratic leaders. This very moment some of the most influential papers in rebeldom are advocating the arming of negro slaves on their side—

and not only that, they are advocating also the emancipation of the slaves so enrolled in the army. Is not this sufficient to silence all Democratic opposition to the measure? If the rebels think of arming their slaves to lead them against us, what impropriety in the world should there be in our arming the blacks to lead them against the rebels? Can you tell? And if the rebels promise emancipation to the negroes fighting for them, are we to be less generous to the negroes fighting for us? Are we so unspeakably mean, that we should refuse to give what costs us nothing? Nay, if the rebels promise them their freedom for fighting in the ranks of the slaveholding South, ought we to keep a race in bondage which is willingly fighting in the ranks of the free North? [Loud and continued cheering.]

But your leaders tell you, that this measure has so irritated our southern brethren, that reconciliation has become impossible unless we abandon it. Emancipation and the arming of negroes irritated the rebels? I doubt it not. You will find generally, that that irritates them most, which hurts them most. [Great applause.] Look at our military and naval leaders. Grant, Sherman, Sheridan, and Farragut have irritated the rebels very severely, for they have hurt them very severely. [Great cheering.] You have chosen as your candidate for the Presidency a General whose nomination does not irritate the rebels at all, probably for the reason that the General never hurt them at all. [Explosion of laughter and cheers.] Would it not be wise to go on irritating the rebellion by hurting it? Who knows—we may succeed in bringing about its death by excessive irritation. [Repeated laughter and cheers.]

Emancipation and the arming of negroes—the only obstacle in the way of reunion! Can your leaders refrain from blushing when they utter it? Or is your recollection of

past events so short that you could believe it? You certainly remember the time, in the first year of the war, when emancipation and negro-arming were not spoken of; nay, when the slaveholder was scrupulously, although very unwisely, protected in the possession of his property. You certainly remember it. If emancipation and negro-arming are the only obstacle in the way of reunion, why, then, did the rebels not come back while emancipation and negro-arming were not spoken of? Can you tell? And that was the time when the rebels dealt us the heaviest blows. You remember the time when the rebellion broke out; Mr. Lincoln could not yet have irritated the rebels with his emancipation policy, for Mr. Buchanan was still President, and he certainly did not think of emancipating and arming the negroes. [Laughter.] If, then, emancipation and negro-arming are the only obstacles in the way of reunion, why did not the rebels return then, or rather, why did they go off at all? Can you tell? And it was just then that they committed the first acts of hostility by taking our forts and arsenals; it was then that they swore, with such terrible emphasis, they would never come back under any circumstances. And still your leaders accuse us of having shut and locked the gates of peace and reconciliation? Will any one of them answer the question: Why, if the emancipation policy of the Government was the only obstacle to reconciliation, why did not the rebels lay down their arms at the time when they might have had peace without emancipation and negro-arming? And still your leaders persist in asserting that the emancipation policy was the only thing that prevented peace? They may be impudent enough to assert it, but can you be foolish enough to believe it? Will you permit them to reckon with impunity upon your being as ignorant and stupid as they are impudent? [Great applause.]

I might now close this review of the arguments by which

your leaders try to convince you that a change of administration and of policy is necessary, were it not for one charge they bring against the Government, and upon which they harp with the most vociferous persistency. It is that the Government has during this war disregarded and violated the rights and liberties of the citizen. I am not the man to equivocate about such matters; I never shrink from discussing the merits or demerits of my own party, and I never deny what I believe to be a fact. Yes, the Government has, in some cases, arrested and punished individuals for treasonable talk and suspended newspapers for treasonable publications, especially when such talk or publications tended to impede recruiting or to induce soldiers to desert their colors. If I stood here as a mere advocate of the Government, I might examine case after case, and say this or that in justification of those in authority. But I will abstain. I will even go so far as to admit that, in some instances, the Government would have acted with more wisdom and justice if it had abstained from such interference. I will go still further, and say that I am, on principle, opposed to such acts, and that, in most cases, the evil done is greater than the evil redressed. I have a right to speak so, for I have always spoken so; at an early period of this war I warned the people of the dangers arising from such encroachments, and from the condition of things that produces them.\*

But where are the facts that would justify the wild denunciations hurled against the government by your Democratic leaders? Where are the "atrocities" which would bear out the assertion "that in this country free speech and free press have ceased to exist? that this Government is the worst despotism the world ever saw?" I ask you in all candor, did you ever attend a Democratic meeting during this election-campaign? If you have, then

\* See above Speech delivered at the Cooper Institute, March 6, 1862, p. 248.

I defy you to show me in the English dictionary a term of opprobrium which has not, by your Democratic speakers, been most lavishly applied to the Government of this Republic! let your imagination invent a calumny, or an insult, that has not been thrown in the face of the President of the United States! And now, while saying with impunity all they do say, they complain that they cannot say what they please? [Bursts of laughter and cheering.] Again, do you read Democratic newspapers? tell me, are not, day after day, the President and all the members of the Government denounced and vilified as the meanest and most execrable villains in all Christendom? And now, while writing what they do write every day with impunity, they insist upon complaining that they cannot write what they please? [Repeated laughter and cheers.]

I invite to judge the character of these vile accusations from another and higher stand-point. Look into the annals of the world; scrutinize the history of every revolutionary movement from the first beginning of political organizations down to the present day; and then show me one in the course of which a government was assailed so fiercely, was calumniated so savagely, was hampered and impeded in its action so unscrupulously, and in which the rights and liberties of the citizen were held so sacred? [Great applause.] I do not say this as if such a comparison could absolutely justify everything that has been done by the Administration; for, the question presenting itself purely and simply, I would not hesitate to declare my opposition to every encroachment upon civil rights and liberties that is not commanded by the most imperative necessity. But what I mean to say, is, that to the provocations springing from revolutionary circumstances, our Government has been yielding in a far less degree than any government history tells us of, and that the offences committed, however censurable in themselves, appear small when com-



pared with the enormity of the charges brought on their account. [Applause.]

And, pray, who are the men who bring these charges? Who are they that suddenly stand up so fiercely in vindication of free press and free speech? Look at them and remember their histories. They are just the same men who, but four or five short years ago, insisted that every anti-slavery speaker should be dragged from the platform, and that every anti-slavery press should be burned to ashes. They are the old advocates of a system of society which cannot breathe the same air with a free press and free speech. Are they not? Look at them man for man! Let them be judged by their own acts. Yes, the men who now are so clamorous about the inviolability of him who uses the liberties of speech and press for the benefit of slavery and treason and all that is villainous under the sun,—they are the same who trampled upon those liberties when they were used in behalf of the rights of man and the moral character of the nation. They who now complain so vociferously of isolated acts committed in times of war, are the same who, in times of peace, attempted to raise restrictions on the freedom of speech and press to the dignity of a system. Are they to be appointed the guardians of our rights and liberties? Let them show that they held the exercise of our rights and liberties sacred when they liked it not—or let them swallow their own denunciations in silence. Of all men, they are the last who have a right to complain! [Continued applause.]

You want the rights and liberties of the citizen protected! Then let us have the Union and peace restored upon the basis of equal justice to all men; let us have a country purged of those abnormities which shun the light of free discussion; let the natural rights of man be held sacred; let us have a Republic firmly established upon complete harmony between our social institutions and the funda-

mental principles underlying our political system,—and the rights and liberties of the citizen will no longer be in danger! [Enthusiastic applause.]

I will return to the question I first proposed to discuss. I have shown you the utter futility of the objections to the policy of our Government brought by your Democratic leaders. If you have followed my argument, you must be convinced how unwise it would be to insist upon overthrowing a policy so reasonable, and withal so successful, upon grounds so foolish and frivolous. I invite you to cast one more look upon the actual situation of things. Trust, I entreat you, trust for once the evidence of your senses. You see the rebellion reduced to extremities by a series of tremendous blows; you see the flag of the Union waving in every State; you see our victorious forces commanding nearly two-thirds of the territory originally held by the rebels; you see our navy commanding all their ports but two; you see the main armies of the Confederacy melting down every day, one of them reduced to a passive defensive, behind the entrenchments of Richmond, and the other engaged in a raiding expedition which is almost certain to bring on its ruin; you see the Rebel President traveling from place to place sounding the signal of distress; you see the Southern press teeming with evidences of their exhaustion in men and money; from their own lips you have the confession of their weakness. On the other hand you see the power of the Union stronger and more defiant than ever; you see the Northern country still abounding in men and material resources; you see a people full of hope and confidence; you see our troops full of the enthusiasm and impatience of an heroic spirit; you hear the commanders of our armies, with proud assurance, predicting a final victory; with your own eyes you see the end step-by-step approaching. [Great cheering.]

And now I ask you in all candor—and I address the

question, not to your pride or imagination but to your common sense—would it be prudent, or manly, or patriotic, to give up a policy which has already led to such tremendous results? Would it be wise to disregard the grave warning of our General-in-Chief who tells us, that the last hope of the rebellion rests, not on its own strength, but on the political divisions among the people of the North? The end is not far off; the object of the struggle is right before us; the way is straight and open. Would it not be an act of supreme folly to turn off to the right or left so as to lose it out of view? Can you, as sensible men, abandon a clear, straight, well-paved road, in order to flounder through the mire of uncertainty, guided by the ignis fatuus of a crazy opposition?

Or do your Democratic leaders offer you anything that would open still more promising prospects? Do they offer anything aside of that violent and insidious criticism of every step taken on the road of success? anything aside of that factious and venomous opposition to those measures of the Government which alone can lead to further success? Do they offer you any positive plan of policy? Ah, yes? At a moment when a few more such vigorous blows as have been struck may finally decide the struggle, they present you the proposition of a cessation of hostilities—the only thing that could save the enemy from such blows. Only look at this: the proposition of an armistice was resolved upon by the Chicago Convention only two or three days before Atlanta fell. Imagine that that resolution had been acted upon immediately—and it certainly was intended to be acted upon; imagine that the Government had adopted the plan of the Democratic party at once, and had despatched a messenger to General Sherman with an order to act according to that policy without delay—what would have been the consequence? Sherman's arm was already lifted to strike the final blow on the rebel hosts;

that arm would have been arrested in the midst of the stroke; our victorious army would have stood still before Atlanta, and, instead of taking the city, would have humbly sued for a cessation of hostilities and for permission to go home unmolested, amidst the jeers and laughter of all rebeldom, nay of the whole world. Is it not so? And is that what you would have? Does not your blood tingle with shame at the mere thought? [Loud and continued applause.]

And such a proposition is the whole positive plan of policy your Democratic leaders had to offer you? Yes, it is all. What? In times like these, at a moment when the grand future of the American Republic seems ready to spring forth from the womb of trial and danger—this most contemptible, dastardly act of surrender is all they have to propose? Yes, all. And now, in the face of these facts, let me see the man who can waver! Let me see the American who can still hesitate when he has to choose between honor and disgrace, between a country saved by the heroic spirit of the people in arms, and a country traded off by the cowardly schemes of political tricksters. [Great applause.]

I will dismiss this branch of the subject. I trust, Democrats, I have shown you, to your satisfaction, that if you sincerely desire to restore the unity of this Republic, it would be either folly or crime for you to follow the tricky advice of your leaders. You must be, and, if you permit your consciences to speak, you are convinced that the restoration of the Union can be achieved only by an open, vigorous, straightforward fight, and by a policy which permits us to make a resolute use of all the elements of strength within our reach. But, you say, the restoration of the Union is not our only object; we want to make the Union a permanent institution. Well, then, how is this to be done? I appeal again to your common sense.

If you want to give permanency to the restored Union, the first thing necessary is, that you put to rest the great element of discord which has continually disturbed the repose and threatened the unity of the Republic. And what is that element? It is the omnipresent, eternal slavery question. Are you not heartily tired of it? You always assured us that you were, and I respond by assuring you that I am. I wish I had never heard of it before, and I wish I might never again hear of it hereafter. [Applause.] Indeed, we have a right to be tired of it. For forty years it has agitated the public mind with continually increasing fury. No compromise could quiet it, no apparent settlement could appease it. Is it necessary that I should show you, why it sprang up again and again in spite of the efforts made to keep it down? I have discussed the point a hundred times; I will not repeat what has been said so often. Enough, it *did* keep the body politic in ceaseless agitation; it *did* at last lead to an attempt to break up the Republic. Everything else could be settled by compromises, or other means of mutual understanding, but the slavery question could not. This is the fact, and with the fact we have to deal. Is it not indeed time that, at last, it should be disposed of and put to rest, so that it may not trouble us again? Is it not a duty we owe to the Union, the restoration of which is bought at so heavy a price, that this great stumbling-block should be taken out of its way? But how dispose of it—how put it to rest forever? There is but one way, and that is simple, straightforward and sure. Let slavery itself disappear from the scene. [Enthusiastic cheering.] Let it die, and it will not trouble us again. Slavery dead, there will be an end of the slavery question. [Repeated cheering.]

You shrink back, Democrats, from the idea of giving the negro his freedom? Why? Have you not told us again and again, that, while we were troubling ourselves



so much about the negro question, the negro himself had every reason to feel happy and contented in the condition of slavery? that he was well fed, well clothed, had but a moderate share of labor to perform, and no earthly cares upon him? Did you not always tell us so? And now mark well, I am reasoning upon the ground of your own proposition. If the picture you draw of the pleasant life of the negro slave is true, well then, in the name of justice and common sense, let the negro, after having so long enjoyed all the comforts of slavery, at last learn to submit to the troubles and hardships of freedom! [Bursts of laughter and applause.] Is a negro better than a white man? [Repeated laughter and cheers.] Why should we expose ourselves to the perplexities of endless controversies on his account? Why should we expose the Republic to the dangers of a ceaseless and furious agitation, merely to secure to the negro the careless ease and the sunny happiness of his patriarchal condition? [Continued laughter and applause.] Let him come forth; let him work for his daily bread on his own responsibility; let him, if need be, shoulder his musket for the defence of the Republic, like the rest of us; let him assume his share of trouble and danger; let him take care of himself—but, for the sake of all that is good and great, let the body politic have rest! Is not this just and reasonable? [Continued applause.]

Still, after having argued thus upon premises advanced by yourselves, I do not ask you, Democrats, to sit down at the feet of William Lloyd Garrison or Wendell Philips, to be initiated in all the doctrines of abolitionism, nor do I expect you to go to the South, gun in hand, for the purpose of freeing every man his negro. Your services are, by no means, indispensable in that line. Slavery is, at this moment, abolishing itself. It is dying of its own poison. [Great applause.] All I ask you to do, is not

to go to the trouble of disturbing the process of nature, but to let it die. [Repeated applause.] Look around you. Slavery has been abolished by the loyal people of West Virginia; it has been abolished in Louisiana; it has been abolished in Arkansas; it has, at last, been abolished in Maryland. [Cheers.] And improving upon the Southern text, we may now sing: "Maryland, *our* Maryland!" [Loud and long cheers.] Missouri, now being fully abolitionized by the rebel General Price, will soon follow the good example, and Tennessee will not lag behind; Kentucky and Delaware, isolated, will have no choice; and as to the rest of the Southern States, as our armies move in, so slavery moves out; only let us shut the door behind it. [Great applause.] Throughout the whole South the system has been so violently shaken by the earthquake of the war, that people are glad to hurry from under. The ball of emancipation is rolling on in obedience to the laws of gravitation. Do not stand in the way. I do not expect you, Democrats, to push; all I ask you to do, is not to put on the brakes. [Applause.] You have always been telling us, that you, individually, did not love slavery; I will go so far as to excuse you even from hating it; only treat it with becoming disdain and indifference, and the rest will easily be attended to. [Renewed cheers and laughter.] Yes, slavery is abolishing itself; you have only to acknowledge the fact, and let it be duly and legally recorded. Then you will be relieved of the controversy, which, as you told us, was always so distasteful to you; with slavery the element of strife and discord will disappear, which alone has imperiled the permanency of the Union. [Applause.]

And why should you not, even if you cannot screw up your feelings to something like sympathy, take advantage of so fine an opportunity to aid in this great consummation by mere indifference? Can you tell me, or

can your leaders tell you, an earthly reason of the least degree of plausibility, why you should endeavor to prevent the disappearance of slavery? why you should refuse to give the sanction of law to a fact so grand? why you should insist upon being troubled by the slavery question? But if there is no reason why you should, and every possible reason why you should not, how can you, as men of sense and spirit, obey the command of those who persistently order you—you shall? When will you, at last, emancipate yourselves from that disgraceful mental servitude, which is an insult to your understanding, and an outrage to your hearts? [Great applause.]

So much about the great measure, which, as reason and experience teach you, must be adopted, if you desire to make the Union a permanent institution. Having now stated the objects we want to accomplish, and reviewed the means by which to accomplish them, I will apply one criterion to the policies of the two contending parties, the justness of which, even the dumbest mind will perceive. Will you, for a moment, try to imagine what will happen, if the Union party succeeds at the approaching election? It is so easy to imagine it; everybody knows it. We shall calmly and steadily continue to pursue the policy which has already led to such glorious results, and which, by its success in the past, gives us solid guarantees for its success in the future. We shall continue to fight, until the rebellion is down on its knees, and begs for peace [applause]; and then we shall grant the people of the rebellious States a peace which is compatible with the permanency of the Union. [Repeated applause.] The means we shall employ are those we have already employed; they are the physical power of arms, and the moral power of a great and just reform. [Continued applause.] This policy is simple, straightforward, and strong; every child can understand the principles upon

which it proceeds, and the ends which it must accomplish. You may ask what we shall do if defeat should come upon us again? The answer is plain. We shall do what we did when defeat was upon us before. We shall rally the strength of the nation once more, and roll its weight against the bulwarks of the rebellion with increased momentum. So we shall go on with a courage indomitable, with a firmness of purpose unbending, with a faith inexhaustible. [Prolonged cheers.] And how can we fail in the end? It is said that right makes might; and right and might united, how can they fail? And thus the policy of the Union party stands before you, clear, unmistakable, reasonable in its means, grand in its ends, sure of ultimate success. [Repeated cheering.]

But, on the other hand, can you imagine what will happen, if the Democratic party succeed at the approaching election? Is there in this vast assembly a member of that party who can tell me? I wait for an answer!—No reply. I do not wonder. To devise an answer to that question requires more than common ingenuity. Even a Yankee would hardly be up to the task. [A laugh.] I declare myself unable to supply the deficiency. Will they carry on the war? No, their platform speaks only of peace. Will they make peace? No, their candidate speaks of war. [Laughter.] What, then, in the name of common sense, will they do? Will they split the difference and pursue a policy in which there will be a little war and a little peace? [Laughter.] A little war, emasculated by a little peace? A little peace which a little war will not be sufficient to win? Democrats, you complain already of the burdens and sacrifices entailed upon you by the war? Then let me tell you, the bloodiest and costliest, because the longest and most undecisive, of wars, is that which is not all war, but has a little peace in it; and the most unsatisfactory, nay, the most impossible

peace, is that which you try to win by just a little war. [Applause.] If, having to deal with an enemy who is determined to resist to the last, you want to save blood and treasure, you must make the war sharp and energetic; you must not think of peace until success is clearly decided. If you want a certain and durable peace, let the defeat of the enemy be so thorough that peace and its conditions are with him not a matter of choice, but a matter of necessity. [Continued applause.] You may tell me that this will be difficult. It may be difficult, but it will be far less difficult than to accomplish a good peace by a little war, for that will be impossible. It may be difficult, but is it not necessary? And now I ask you, not only as patriots but as sensible men, will you confide a task which is so necessary and so difficult, to the hands of men who confessedly have no policy, or if they have, do not dare to avow it? Will you place the future of the Republic into the hands of a party, whose purposes are all confusion, indecision, and darkness? Will you stake the very life of the nation upon the success of a plan of which you yourselves do not know what it is? You would despise a man who in the mere affairs of every-day life should act so foolishly; and yet you would set the commonest rules of prudence aside, when your own peace, power, liberty, happiness, security — your all, and that of your children and children's children is at stake! [Applause.]

Democrats, you cannot say that I have endeavored to befog your judgment with the artifices of oratory; you cannot say that I have tried to work upon your passions or your pride. I have not spoken to you from the standpoint of what you call sentimental philanthropy, nor have I even endeavored to stir up those tender sympathies with the suffering and downtrodden, which sleep in every human heart, and which, when aroused, might bias the



reasoning of your minds. No, placing myself upon the identical ground which you yourselves for years have been in the habit of occupying, I have argued with you in the plain, dry, cold language of common sense. I have endeavored to prove to you, not what would be patriotic, exalted and noble, but simply what would be useful; I have appealed only to the instincts of your selfishness; and now does not your practical sense tell you that in every word I said I was right? If you are honest to yourselves you cannot deny it.

But I feel almost ashamed of having addressed such arguments to you; I feel as if I had to beg your pardon for it—for is it not humiliating that, in a crisis so solemn, so big with portentous decisions, we should, in order to reach the minds of a large number of American citizens, have to descend to a strain of reasoning so low? Is it not humiliating, that at a moment when interests so vast, principles so grand are at stake—when the whole future of the Republic, nay, the whole credit of the republican system of government trembles in the scale, we should be obliged to reply to the miserable rant and cant of disappointed party ambition? Do you not feel it to be a sad thing that, in such an hour, we should, in order to make an impression upon Americans, have to lower ourselves so far as to argue upon the assumed ground, that the brothers and parents and children of men who are fighting for this Republic on the battlefield can be held as property by the enemies of the Republic? May the genius of liberty forgive me for having done so, a single moment, only for argument's sake! Indeed, my friends, if there is one thing for which this nation would have a reason to be ashamed in all future time, it is, that it should have required the plea of necessity to justify a great reform which was dictated by the eternal laws of justice. and which ought to have been accomplished by the moral

sense of the people alone. [Loud and prolonged applause.] For this, I say, this nation would have to be ashamed, were it not that this necessity was welcomed by the majority of the people with eager joy, for the desire to accomplish the great act was alive in their hearts, not waiting for a reason, but longing for an opportunity. [Repeated applause.] But will you, Democrats, expose yourselves to the terrible charge that even necessity found you unwilling to obey the commands of justice and humanity? that you would rather risk the Union and the blessings of free institutions, than wipe out the curse and abomination of slavery?

I repeat, I have appealed only to your selfishness. Let me hope that it would be unjust to you if I should stop here. I ask you to look for a moment beyond the limits of your own immediate interests. Sixteen years ago I was among those who, with the ardor of youthful hearts, plunged into the great struggle for Liberty in the Old World. I will not discuss here the correctness of our views and the practicability of our plans; but I will call up before you one feature of that contest which has a direct bearing upon the issues of our present struggle. We were at once met by the advocates of despotic power with the question: "Do you not know that in all times democratic government was a mere synonym with weakness and instability? Can you show us one in the history of the world, which, after having expanded beyond the limits of a single city or a small territory, was not at once either obliged to yield helplessly to the shock of foreign invasion or torn to pieces by the struggle of factions within?" We had to admit it, for neither Greece nor Rome, nor the Italian Republics, and still less republican France, could be adduced as examples to prove the contrary. The practicability of republican institutions on a great scale was yet to be proved. Then we pointed with

triumphant assurance to the American Republic, which had undertaken the solution of the great problem, and had, at least, lasted its seventy years. But the answer was ready: "You will see! The aristocracy of the slaveholding South, governed by the ambitious instincts common to all aristocracies, will one day make a bold stroke for the permanent possession of supreme power in the Republic; the Republic will be involved in a fierce conflict of antagonistic elements; the democratic society of the North will either not have strength enough to resist the attempt of the Southern aristocracy, and the whole character of their government and institutions will thus be changed, or, in endeavoring to resist it, the democratic North will soon be distracted by conflicting counsel, and the government will sink in helpless impotency in the confused struggle of restless and uncontrollable factions." Such was the prophecy. Americans, one part of it has become true. Shall the other become true also? ["No, no!"] Shall it be written in the history of the world, that, while there was power of cohesion in the slaveholding aristocracy of the South, the democratic society of the North, distracted by the treacherous schemes of unscrupulous demagogues, unable to unite upon a common plan of action, disarmed itself in the struggle for national existence? Shall it be written: the Northern people were so demoralized by the effects of democratic life, that, when neither the resources of the country nor the fortunes of war failed them, they basely abandoned themselves, and that thus the great problem of democratic government on a grand scale was doomed to the everlasting stigma of failure? [Cries of "No! no!"]

Democrats, look over the old world. As far as mankind walks in the light of modern civilization, as far as the tidings of our great struggle have penetrated palace and cottage, there is not a single friend of despotism who

is not the rebels' and your friend; there is not a single heart beating for suffering and struggling humanity which is not beating for our cause! [Great applause.] And why is this? Because the destinies of all progressive movements the world over are linked together in a bond of sympathy with the destinies of this Republic; because the American Republic can stand in the history of the world in one of two characters only: either as the great beacon-light and guiding-star of humanity, or as a terrible, warning example; because, if we succeed, if we issue from this crisis a greater, a freer, a purer, and a more firmly united people, our success will be an argument for liberty everywhere, and the cause of progress in all countries will celebrate a victory; and if we fail, generations may have to pass away before any nation on earth will dare again to pronounce the word Republic. [Loud and prolonged applause.] And thus the nations of the world are standing around us, watching with eager attention the progress of the struggle, cheering us on to stand firm by the cause which is not only ours, but theirs also; and, so help us heaven, we will! [enthusiastic applause]; and appealing to you to give up your distracting schemes, and to remember the duties the American Republic owes to mankind! [Repeated applause.]

Can such an appeal be lost upon you? If it be lost upon you, if you can, indeed, shut your ears against the demands of interest and prudence, and shut your hearts against the calls of patriotism and the great cause of humanity; if you will insist upon following with stubborn blindness the command of unscrupulous leaders, then you may do so at least with the consciousness of prostituting yourselves in vain. [Applause.] And upon this point I want to be correctly and distinctly understood. I do not ask you for your votes as if we needed them. [Repeated cheering.] Far from it. For I feel

safe in telling you — and what I say comes from my sincerest convictions — we are already strong enough without you to elect a President of the United States, and to determine the future policy of the Government. Your aid is by no means indispensable. Do what you please; you may be strong enough to make our triumph still more brilliant by your support; you are too weak to prevent it by your opposition. [Prolonged and enthusiastic cheering.] And with equal confidence I will predict another thing. On the 9th day of November, 1864, the so-called Democratic party, as it is at present composed and constituted, with its present policy and aspirations, will have ceased to exist. [Repeated cheering.] Upon its tomb we may write the inscription: "True to slavery to the last — to the jeopardy of the Union — even to suicide!" [Enthusiastic applause.] Like the bigoted widow of Hindostan, that party throws itself upon the funeral pile whose flames consume the putrid remains of its lord and master. [Great applause.]

This is no idle boast. The best of your old standard-bearers have left you in disgust, and are now working with heart and hand on our side. And not only they. The best of your rank and file are now fighting under the banner of the Union, not only with their muskets, but also with their votes. Do you not know it? You have heard the voices of the soldiers, not only as they speak in tones of thunder to the armed rebels of the South, but as they speak in triple tones of thunder to the disguised traitors of the North. [Enthusiastic cheers.] You boasted once that a large majority of the soldiers in the field came from the ranks of the Democratic party. Where are they now? The army vote, whenever it was cast, stood nine for the Union candidates to one for the Opposition. Did the Democratic party, indeed, send only one in ten? I have heard it said that the soldiers' vote



is no reliable indication of the soldiers' political sentiments; that the soldier votes as his officer directs him. He who says so, little knows the independent spirit of the American volunteer. [Applause.] But, if it were so, what then, pray, has become of your Democratic officers? [Laughter.] No, I will not be unjust to you.\* You have, indeed, sent a very large number of men from the ranks of your party into the army; and there they are, flesh of your flesh, and blood of your blood. Why, then, do those Democratic soldiers no longer vote with you? Let me say to you, that every man, to whatever party he may belong, as soon as he becomes a good Union soldier, becomes at the same time a good Union *man*. [Applause.]

The soldier has gone through a school which would do a world of good to most of your leading politicians. [Laughter and cheers.] His political principles have been burned clean in the red-hot crucible of battle. In the awful solemnity of those moments when death stared him in the face, and when he squared his accounts with heaven and earth, he rose to a full appreciation of the tremendous responsibility, not only of the fighting, but also of the voting citizen; then he felt clearly that his allegiance to party was nothing when in conflict with his allegiance to the great cause of his country; then, rising above all his former prejudices, he became ready to acknowledge that this Union can be restored only upon the basis of universal liberty, and that liberty does not consist in the right of one man to hold another man as property. [Great applause.] And, after having learned to understand these great truths, the soldier feels no longer tempted to betray with his vote the cause for which he is fighting with his bayonet. It appears foolish, nay, criminal to him, to shoot in one direction and vote in another. This, and no other, is the reason

why the soldiers sent to the army from the ranks of your party have turned against you. [Enthusiastic applause.]

Now, go into the hospitals, Democrats, and look for your old party friends there. If you find one with only one arm, he is certainly a Union man, for he has lost the other arm when fighting for the great and free future of his country. He may no longer be strong enough to load and fire a musket, but his one arm you will find certainly strong enough to wield a ballot for Liberty and Union. [Great cheering.] If you find an old Democrat with one leg, he has certainly turned against you, for the other leg was lost in battle against the enemies of the Union. He may no longer be able to march against the rebels in arms, but his one leg is still strong enough to support him when standing up, firm as a rock, against the aiders of the rebellion in the North. [Repeated cheers.] And if the dead could vote, every one of those fallen in battle would pierce the soil with his bony hand and fling a vote of condemnation in the faces of those who, with their insidious schemes imperil the great cause for which our dead heroes have shed their precious blood. [Loud and continued cheering.]

Thus you see how strong we are; reinforced by the best elements of your own party; supported by the true instincts of the American people, and urged onward by the conscience and the pride of the nation. No, indeed, I do not demand your votes as if we needed them for our success. It is for your own sakes that I appeal to you. This great struggle will pass into history, and no man that has taken any part in it will escape the judgment of posterity. Not many years hence the American people will celebrate another great national festival besides the Fourth of July. That will be the anniversary of the day when the same hand which wrote the Emancipation

Proclamation, signs another proclamation announcing to the people of this country, nay, to the nations of the earth, the restoration of the Union upon the basis of the liberty of all men. [Enthusiastic and long-continued cheering.] That day will fill the national heart with even more pride and exultation than the anniversary of the Declaration of Independence; for, while on the Fourth of July we celebrate only the starting of the great democratic experiment, on the other anniversary we shall celebrate its final and unquestionable success. And wherever there is in this wide world a friend of liberty and the rights of man struggling against the power of his enemies, and, perhaps, also against doubts within himself, on that day his heart will expand with fresh confidence, and his eye will gleam with new hope, and he will point his finger at this great consummation, and say: Let him who does not believe in the faculty of man to govern himself, look at that grand, unanswerable argument!

Democrats, did you ever think of it, how *you* will feel on that day? [Bursts of applause.] When, on that day, every breeze is fraught with the congratulations of mankind; when every good citizen who helped the country on in the great struggle, feels himself as great as a king; when the majesty of the Republic sits on the forehead of every patriot, where will you then hide your faces? When, on that day, your children mix their little voices with the general rejoicing, and add to the din of the jubilee the little noise of their fire-crackers, what will you have to say to them? You will call them in from the street, and say: Come away, my little ones, and be still, for I had no share in this; when Union and Liberty triumphed, I belonged to the defeated party; come away from the street, for you might meet a negro boy whose father fell at Petersburg, and he would look down upon

you with scorn and contempt! Yes, yes! So you will have to speak on that day. Do you feel what that means? Beware, I beseech you, beware, lest there be a day when every patriot will be proud and jubilant, and when your children will be ashamed to confess the name of their father. [Enthusiastic and long-continued applause.]

Look around you and see how great your nation is in these times of trial! If a courage which no danger can daunt; if a perseverance which no adversity can break; if a willingness to sacrifice her blood and treasure which no demand can exhaust; if a fidelity to just principles and a firmness of purpose which no threat can stagger, and no seduction can swerve, constitute a nation's claim to greatness, you search in vain the annals of the world for a people that could show a better title. And in these days of great deeds, and a great devotion, will you, *can* you insist upon being so small as to speak of nothing but difficulties you do not want to face; of sacrifices you do not want to make; of calls for military service you do not want to submit to; of taxes you do not want to pay? Even the rebels, detestable as is their cause, and deep as may be their sorrow and repentance when, at a future day, they look back upon the course they have run, even they will at least be able to set up a claim for that measure of esteem which is but seldom denied to courage and valor. But you! If your leaders be content to have nothing with which to propitiate the judgment of posterity but the factious selfishness of their complaints, the artful sophistries of their criticisms, and their contemptible sneers at the negro who with his blood—blood shed most freely for you as well as himself—has sealed his title to manhood and freedom,—will you be content to have nothing to plead in justification of your conduct but the passive indolence with which you followed so disgraceful a lead? Do not deceive yourselves! Even the

guilty and unfortunate men who fight valiantly for what is bad, will stand before the tribunal of history in a less contemptible attitude than those who, either with cowardly malice, or with culpable thoughtlessness, strive to prevent the success of that which is good.

I entreat you to think for yourselves! As men of prudence, think of your true interests, and those of your children; they can alone be secured by a solid and lasting peace, such as will be the fruit only of an energetic and decisive war. As patriots and men of honor, think of the future of your country; it can be peaceful and prosperous only when founded upon a Union in which the spirit of justice and liberty reigns supreme, and the rights of man are held sacred. As citizens of the great Republic, think of the duty we owe to mankind; it rests with us to furnish to the world the conclusive proof, a proof as incontestable as fact can make it, that a Republic, organized on the largest scale, may have in itself elements of order and strength enough to brave the storm of rebellion and war, and to carry the liberties of the people and the security of society safe through the turmoils of internal dissension; nay, that from the terrible ordeal it may issue purified of the stains that disfigured it, relieved of the wrongs that burdened it, stronger in the affections of the people, and more formidable by the development and exercise of its power.

I repeat it, think for yourselves, and then join us in giving the nations of the earth this noble example: let the people of the United States, on the day of the national election, declare that, if the cause of Union and Liberty requires they should continue to fight, it is their own free will to give up their sons to the country and fight; if it requires they should continue to pay, it is their own free will to bear whatever burdens the struggle may bring with it, and pay; if it requires they should



continue to suffer, it is their own free will to submit to whatever sacrifices, trials and hardships the cause may impose, and suffer. It is thus that the sovereignty of the people will be vindicated by the moral heroism of the people; thus this Republic, out of her greatest trial evolving her greatest triumph, will become worthy of her proud stand at the head of the century, and the flag of this country, in whatever quarter of the globe it may appear, will be hailed as a living proof of the faculty of man to govern himself. [Enthusiastic and long-continued applause.]













